

The Hengwrt ms of Chaucer's Canterbury tales

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Chaucer Society.

THE
Gengwt MS

(No. 154)

OF
Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.



PART III.

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The Chaucer Society.

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THE CHAUCER SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

To do honour to CHAUCER, and to let the lovers and students of him see how far the best unprinted Manuscripts of his works differed from the printed texts, this Society was founded in 1868. There were then, and are still, many questions of metre, pronunciation, orthography, and etymology yet to be settled, for which more prints of Manuscripts were and are wanted; and it is hardly too much to say that every line of Chaucer contains points that need reconsideration. The founder (Dr Furnivall) began with *The Canterbury Tales*, and has given of them (in parallel columns in Royal 4to) six of the best theretofore unprinted Manuscripts known. Inasmuch as the parallel arrangement necessitated the alteration of the places of certain tales in some of the MSS, a print of each MS has been issued separately, following the order of its original. The first six MSS printed have been: the Ellesmere (by leave of the Earl of Ellesmere); the Hengwrt (by leave of W. W. E. Wynne, Esq.); the Camb. Univ. Libr., MS Gg. 4. 27; the Corpus, Oxford; the Petworth (by leave of Lord Leconfield); and the Lansdowne 851 (Brit. Mus.). The Harleian 7334 has followed.

Of Chaucer's *Minor Poems*,—the MSS of which are generally later than the best MSS of the *Canterbury Tales*,—all the available MSS have been printed, so as to secure all the existing evidence for the true text.

The *Troilus* Parallel-Text from the 3 best MSS has been issued, and a 4th MS text of it with the englisht Boccaccio Comparison.

To secure the fidelity and uniform treatment of the texts, Dr F. J. Furnivall has read and will read all with their MSS.

Autotypes of most of the best Chaucer MSS have been publisht.

The Society's publications are issued in two Series, of which the first contains the different texts of Chaucer's works; and the Second, such originals of and essays on these as can be procured, with other illustrative treatises, and Supplementary Tales.

Messrs Trübner & Co., of 57 & 59, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., are the Society's publishers, Messrs R. Clay and Sons of Bungay its printers, and the Alliance Bank, Bartholomew Lane, London, E.C., its bankers. The yearly subscription, which constitutes Membership, is two guineas, due on every 1st January, beginning with Jan. 1, 1868. *More Members are wanted. All the Society's Publications can still be had. Those of the first year have been reprinted.*

Prof. Child, of Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the Society's Honorary Secretary for America. Members' names and subscriptions may be sent to the Publishers, or to the Honorary Secretary,

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FIRST SERIES.

The Society's issue for 1868, in the **First Series**, is,

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II.	The Prologue and Knight's Tale from the	Ellesmere	MS.		Part I.
III.	"	"	"	Hengwrt	" 154 "
IV.	"	"	"	Cambridge	" Gg. 4. 27 "
V.	"	"	"	Corpus	" Oxford "
VI.	"	"	"	Petworth	" " "
VII.	"	"	"	Lansdowne	" 851 "

separate issues of the Texts forming Part I of the Six-Text edition.)

The issue for 1869, in the **First Series**, is,

VIII.	The Miller's, Reeve's, and Cook's Tales:	Ellesmere	MS.		Part II.
IX.	"	"	"	Hengwrt	"
X.	"	"	"	Cambridge	"
XI.	"	"	"	Corpus	"
XII.	"	"	"	Petworth	"
XIII.	"	"	"	Lansdowne	"

with an
Appendix of
"Gamelyn"
from
six MSS.

(separate issues of the Texts forming the Six-Text, Part II, No. XIV.)

The issue for 1870, in the **First Series**, is,

- XIV. The Miller's, Reeve's, and Cook's Tales, with an Appendix of the Spurious Tale of Gamelyn, in 6 parallel Texts. (Six-Text, Part II.)

The issue for 1871, in the **First Series**, is,

- XV. The Man of Law's, Shipman's, and Prioress's Tales, with Chaucer's own Tale of Sir Thopas, in 6 parallel Texts from the MSS above named, and 10 coloured drawings of Tellers of Tales, after the originals in the Ellesmere MS. Part III.
- XVI. The Man of Law's Tale, from the Ellesmere MS.
- XVII. " " " " " " " Cambridge MS.
- XVIII. " " " " " " " Corpus MS.
- XIX. The Shipman's, Prioress's, and Man of Law's Tales, from the Petworth MS.
- XX. The Man of Law's Tale, from the Lansdowne MS.
(each with woodcuts of fourteen drawings of Tellers of Tales in the Ellesmere MS.)
- XXI. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I:—1. '*The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*,' from Thynne's ed. of 1532, the Fairfax MS 16, and Tanner MS 346; 2. '*the Compleynt to Pite*,' 3. '*the Parliament of Foules*,' and 4. '*the Compleynt of Mars*,' each from six MSS.
- XXII. Supplementary Parallel-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I, containing 1. '*The Parliament of Foules*,' from three MSS.*
- XXIII. Odd Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part I, containing 1. two MS fragments of '*The Parliament of Foules*;' 2. the two differing versions of '*The Prologue to the Legende of Good Women*,' arranged so as to show their differences; 3. an Appendix of Poems attributed to Chaucer, I. '*The Balade of Pitee by Chauciers*;' II. '*The Cronycle made by Chaucer*,' both from MSS written by Shirley, Chaucer's contemporary.
- XXIV. A One-Text Print of Chaucer's Minor Poems, being the best Text from the Parallel-Text Edition, Part I, containing, I. The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse, II. The Compleynt to Pite, III. The Parliament of Foules, IV. The Compleynt of Mars, V. The ABC, with its original from De DeGuilleville's *Pèlerinage de la Vie humaine* (edited from the best Paris MSS by M. Paul Meyer).

The issue for 1872, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXV. Chaucer's Tale of Melibe, the Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, in 6 parallel Texts from the MSS above named, with the remaining 13 coloured drawings of Tellers of Tales, after the originals in the Ellesmere MS, and with Specimens of the Variations of 30 MSS in the Doctor-Pardoner Link. (6-Text, Pt IV.)
- XXVI. The Wife's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, from the Ellesmere MS, with 9 woodcuts of Tale-Tellers. (Part IV.)
- XXVII. The Wife's, Friar's, Summoner's, Monk's, and Nun's-Priest's Tales, from the Hengwrt MS, with 23 woodcuts of the Tellers of the Tales. (Part III.)
- XXVIII. The Wife's, Friar's, and Summoner's Tales, from the Cambridge MS, with 9 woodcuts of Tale-Tellers. (Part IV.)
- XXIX. A Treatise on the Astrolabe, addressed to his son Lowys, in 1391 A.D., by Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat, M.A.

The issue for 1873, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXX. The Six-Text Canterbury Tales, Part V, containing the Clerk's and Merchant's Tales.

The issue for 1874, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXXI. The Six-Text, Part VI, containing the Squire's and Franklin's Tales.
- XXXII. The Clerk's, Merchant's, Squire's, Franklin's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Second Nun's Tales, Ellesmere MS, Part V.
- XXXIII. The Clerk's, Merchant's, Squire's, Franklin's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Second Nun's Tales, Cambridge MS, Part V.
- XXXIV. Squire's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Merchant's, Franklin's Tales, Corpus MS, Part IV.
- XXXV. Squire's, Merchant's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Franklin's, Second Nun's Tales, Petworth MS, Part IV.
- XXXVI. Squire's, Wife of Bath's, Friar's, Summoner's, Clerk's, Merchant's, Franklin's Tales, Lansdowne MS, Part IV.

The issue for 1875, in the **First Series**, is,

- XXXVII. The Six-Text, Part VII, the Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, and Manciple's Tales, with the Blank-Parson Link.
- XXXVIII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Manciple's Tales, Ellesmere MS, Part VI.

* This is reprinted in LIX of First Series.

- XXXIX. Manciple's, Man of Law's, Squire's, Merchant's, Franklin's, Second Nun's, Clerk's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus Tales, Hengwrt MS, Part IV.
- XL. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Manciple's Tales, Cambridge MS, Part VI.
- XLI. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Corpus MS, Part V.
- XLII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Petworth MS, Part V.
- XLIII. Second Nun's, Canon's-Yeoman's, Doctor's, Pardoner's, Shipman's, Prioress's Tales, Sir Thopas, Melibeus, Monk's, Nun's-Priest's, Manciple's Tales, Lansdowne MS, Part V.
- XLIV. A detailed Comparison of the *Troilus and Cryseyde* with Boccaccio's *Filosttrato*, with a Translation of all Passages used by Chaucer, and an Abstract of the Parts not used, by W. Michael Rossetti, Esq., and with a print of the *Troilus* from the Harleian MS 3943. Part I.
- XLV. Ryne-Index to the Ellesmere MS of the Canterbury Tales, by Henry Cromie, Esq., M.A. In 8vo for the separate Ellesmere MS.
- XLVI. Ryne-Index to the Ellesmere MS, by Henry Cromie, Esq., M.A. In Royal 4to for the *Six-Text*.
- XLVII. Notes and Corrections for the 8vo Ryne-Index, by H. Cromie, Esq., M.A.

The issue for 1876, in the **First Series**, is,

- XLVIII. Autotype Specimens of the Chief Chaucer MSS, Part I, 16 Autotypes, with a Note on the MSS, by F. J. Furnivall.

The issue for 1877, in the **First Series**, is,

- XLIX. The *Six-Text*, Part VIII, containing the Parson's Tale, with a Table of its Contents; and Mr Hy. Cromie's Notes and Corrections for the Ryne-Index (4to.), No. XLV.
- L. The Parson's Tale, Ellesmere MS, Part VII.
- LI. " " " Hengwrt MS, Part V.
- LII. " " " Cambridge MS, Part VII.
- LIII. " " " Corpus MS, Part VI.
- LIV. " " " Petworth MS, Part VI.
- LV. " " " Lansdowne MS, Part VI.

The issue for 1878, in the **First Series**, is,

- LVI. Autotype Specimens of the Chief Chaucer MSS, Part II: 9 from the Cambridge MS Gg. 4. 27, and 1 from Lord Leconfield's MS.
- LVII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II:—5. The *A B C*, from 6 MSS; 6. The *Mother of God*, from 3 MSS; 7. *Anelida and Arcyte*, from 5 MSS and Caxton's print; 8. The *Former Age*, from 2 MSS (with the Latin original, and Chaucer's prose Englishing); 9. To his *Scrivener* from Shirley's MS and Stowe's print; 10. The *House of Fame*, from 2 MSS and Caxton's and Thynne's prints.

The issue for 1879, in the **First Series**, is,

- LVIII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part III, completing the *Parallel-Text*, and containing, 11. The *Legend of Good Women* from 5 MSS and Thynne's print; 12. *Truth* from 6 MSS; 13. The *Compleynt of Venus* from 6 MSS; 14. The *Envoy to Scogan* from 3 MSS; 15. *Marriage*, or The *Envoy to Bukton*, from 1 MS and Notary's and Thynne's prints; 16. *Gentilesse* from 6 MSS; 17. *Proverbs* from 3 MSS; 18. *Stedfastness* from 6 MSS; 19. *Fortune* from 6 MSS; 20. *Chaucer to his empty Purse*, from 6 MSS.

The issue for 1880, in the **First Series**, is,

- LIX. Supplementary Parallel-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II:—1a. The *Parlament of Foules* from 3 MSS; 2. The *A B C* from 6 MSS; 3. *Anelida and Arcyte* from 6 MSS; 4. The *Legend of Good Women*, in whole or part from 4 MSS; 5. The *Complaint of Mars* from 3 MSS; 6. *Truth* from 6 MSS; 7. The *Compleynt of Venus* from 3 MSS; 8. *Gentilesse* from 3 MSS; 9. *Lack of Stedfastness* from Thynne's print and 2 MSS; 10. *Fortune* from 2 MSS and Caxton's print.
- LX. Odd-Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II, containing, 3. The *A B C*, from 2 MSS; 4. The *House of Fame*, from the Pepys' MS, &c.; 5. The *Legend of Good Women* from 3 MSS; 6. The *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse* from 1 MS; 7. The *Complaint to Pity* from 2 MSS; 8. The *Parlament of Fowles* from 1 MS; 9. *Truth* from 3 MSS; 10. *Envoy to Scogan* from 1 MS; 11. *Purse* from 1 MS.
- LXI. A One-Text Print of Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II, containing, VI. *Mother of God*; VII. *Anelida*; VIII. The *Former Age*; IX. *Adam Scrivener*; X. The *House of Fame*; XI. *Legende*; XII. *Truth*; XIII. *Venus*; XIV. *Scogan*; XV. *Marriage*; XVI. *Gentilesse*; XVII. *Proverbs*; XVIII. *Stedfastness*; XIX. *Fortune*; XX. *Purse*.
- LXII. Autotype Specimens of the chief Chaucer MSS. Part III: 2 from Henry V's MS of the *Troilus*, when he was Prince of Wales (now Mr Bacon Frank's); 1 from Shirley's MS of the *ABC* at Sion Coll.

GROUP D. FRAGMENT V.

§ 1. WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE.

HENGWRT MS.

¶ Here bigynneth the prologe of the tale of [leaf 58]
the Wyf of Bathe.

Experience / thogh noon Auctoritee
Were in this world / is right ynogh for me
To speke of wo / that is in mariage
ffor lordynges / sith þat I twelf yeer was of age 4
Thonked be god / that is eterne on lyue.
Housbondes atte chirche dore / I haue had fyue
If I so ofte / myghte han wedded be
And alle were worthy men / in hir degree 8
But me was told certeyn / noght longe agon is
That sith þat Crist' ne wente neuere but onys
To weddyng' in the Cane of Galilee
That by the same ensample / taughte he me 12
That I ne sholde / wedded be but ones
¶ Herke eek / lo / which a sharp word for the nones
Bisyde a welle / Ihesus / god and man
Spak / in repreeue of the Samaritan 16
¶ Thow hast yhad / fyue housbondes quod he
And that ilke man / which that now hath thee
Is nat thyn housbonde / thus he seyde certeyn.
What that he mente ther-by / I kan nat seyn 20
But þat I axe / why þat the fifthe man
Was noon housbonde / to the Samaritan
How manye / myghte she han in mariage
Yet herde I neuere / tellen in myn age 24

Vp-on this nombre / diffynycioun
 Men may dyuyne / and glosen vp & doun
 But wel I woot expres / with-outen lye
 God bad vs / for to wexe and multiplie 28
 That gentil text^t kan I wel vnderstonde
 ¶ Eek wel I woot^t he seyde þat myn housbonde
 Sholde lete / fader and moder/ and take to me
 But of no nombre / mencion^d made he 32
 Of Bigamye / or of Octogamye
 Why sholde men thanne / speke of it vileynye
 ¶ Lo here / the wise kyng^t Dann Salomon
 I trowe / he hadde wyues many oon 36
 As wolde god / it leueful were to me [leaf 58, back]
 To be refresshed / half so ofte as he
 Which yifte of god hadde he / for alle hise wyuys
 No man hath swich / that in this world alyue is 40
 God woot^t this noble kyng^t as to my wit
 The firste nyght^t hadde many a murye fit
 With ech of hem / so wel was hym on lyue
 Blessed be god / that I haue wedded fyue 44
 Wel come the sixte / whan þat euere he shal
 ffor sith I wol nat kepe me / chaast in al
 Whan myn housbonde / is fro the world agon
 Som cristen man / shal wedde me anon 48
 ffor thanne thapostle seith / þat I am free
 To wedde a goddes half / where it liketh me
 He seith / that to be wedded is no synne
 Bet is to be wedded / than to brynne 52
 What rekketh me / theigh folk/ seye vileynye
 Of shrewed Lameth / and his bigamye
 I woot wel / Abraham was an holy man
 And Iacob eek^t as fer as euere I kan 56
 And ech of hem / hadde wyues mo than two
 And many another / holy man also
 ¶ Where kan ye seye / in any maner age
 That heighe god / defended mariage 60

By expres word / I pray yow telleth me
 Or where comanded he virgynytee
 I woot as wel as ye / it is no drede
 Thapostle / whan he speketh of maydenhede 64
 He seyde / that precept ther-of / hadde he noon
 Men may conseil a womman / to be oon
 But conseillyng^t nys no comandement^t
 He put it^t in oure owene Iuggement^t 68
 ffor hadde god / comanded maydenhede
 Thanne hadde he dampned weddyng^t *with* the dede
 And certes / if ther were no seed ysowe
 Virgynytee thanne / wher-of sholde it growe 72
 Poul dorste nat comanden / at the leeste
 A thyng^t of which / his mayster yaf noon heeste
 The dart / is set vp for virgynytee
 Cacche who so may / who renneth best lat se 76
 But this word / is noght take of euery wight^t [leaf 59]
 But ther as god / list yeue it of his myght^t
 I woot wel / that thapostle was a mayde
 But natheles / thogh þat he wroot^t or sayde 80
 He wolde / that euery wight^t were swich as he
 Al nys but conseil / to virgynytee
 And for to been a wyf / he yaf me leue
 Of Indulgence / so nys it no repreue 84
 To wedde me / if that my make dye
 With-uten excepcioñ of bigamye
 Al were it good / no womman for to touche
 He mente / as in his bed / or in his couche 88
 ffor peril is / bothe fyr and tow tassemble
 Ye knowe / what this ensample may resemble
 This al and som / he heeld virgynytee
 Moore parfit^t than weddyng in freletee 92
 ffreletee clepe I / but if þat he and she
 Wolde leden / al hir lyf^t in chastitee
 I graunte it wel / I haue noon enuye
 Thogh maydenhede / *preferre* bigamye 96

It liketh hem to be clene / in body and goost^t
 Of myn estat^t ne wol I make no boost^t
 ffor wel ye knowe / a lord in his houshold
 Ne hath nat euery vessel / al of gold 100
 Somme been of tree / and doon hir lord seruyse
 God clepeth folk to hym / in sondry wyse
 And euerich / hath of god a propre yifte
 Som this / som that^t as hym liketh shifte 104
 Virgynytee / is greet perfeccioñ
 And continence eek^t with deuocioñ
 But Crist^t that of perfeccion / is welle
 Bad nat euery wight^t he sholde go selle 108
 Al that he hadde / and yeue it to the poore
 And in swich wise / folwe hym and his foore
 He spak to hem / that wol lyue parfitly
 And lordynges / by youre leue / that am nat I 112
 I wol bistowe / the flour of al myn age
 In thactes / and in fruyt of mariage
 ¶ Telle me also / to what conclusioñ questio :
 Were membres maad / of generacioñ 116
 And of so parfit^t wys a wight ywroght / [leaf 59, back]
 Trusteth right wel / they were nat maad for noght^t
 Glose who so wole / and seye bothe vp and doun
 That they were maad / for purgacioun 120
 Of Vryne / and oure bothe thynges smale
 Was eek to knowe / a femelle / from a male
 And for noon oother cause / sey ye / no ?
 Thexperience / woot wel it is noght so 124
 So that the Clerkes / be nat with me wrothe
 I sey this / þat they maked been for bothe
 That is to seyn / for office and for ese
 Of engendrure / ther we nat god displese 128
 Why sholde men ellis / in hir bokes sette
 That man shal yelde / to his wyf hir dette
 Now wherwith / sholde he make his paiement
 If he ne vsed / his sely Instrument 132

Thanne were they maad / vp-on a creature
 To purge vryne / and eek for engendrure
 ¶ But I seye noght^t þat euery wight is holde
 That hath swich harneys / as I to yow tolde 136
 To goon / and vsen hem in engendrure
 Thanne sholde men take / of Chastitee no cure
 Crist was a mayde / and shapen as a man
 And many a Seynt^t sith that the world bigan 140
 yet lyued they euere / in parfit Chastitee
 I nyl envie / no virgynytee
 Lat hem be breed / of pured whete seed
 And lat us wyues / hote Barlybreed 144
 And yet *with* Barlybreed / Mark telle kan
 Oure lord Ihesu / refresshed many a man
 In swich estat^t as god hath clepyd vs
 I wol perseuere / I nam nat precius 148
 In wifhode / wol I vse myn Instrument^t
 As frely / as my makere hath it sent^t
 If I be daungerous / god yeue me sorwe
 Myn housbonde / shal it han / bothe eue and morwe 152
 Whan that hym list^t com forth and paye his dette
 And housbonde / wol I haue / I wol nat lette
 Which shal be / bothe / my dettour and my thral
 And haue / his tribulacion / with-al 156
 Vp-on his flessch / whil that I am his wyf [leaf 60]
 I haue the power / duryng al my lyf
 Vp-on his propre body / and nat he
 Right thus / thapostle / tolde it vn-to me 160
 And bad oure housbondes / for to loue vs wel
 Al this sentence / me liketh euery del
Vp stirte the Pardoner / and that anon
 Now dame quod he / by god and by Seint Ioħn 164
 Ye been a noble Prechour / in this cas
 I was aboute / to wedde a wyf allas
 What^t sholde I bye it / on my flessch so deere
 Yet hadde I leuere / wedde no wyf to yeere 168

¶ Abyd quod she / my tale is nat bigonne
 Nay / thow shalt drynken / of another tonne
 Er þat I go / shal sauoure wors than Ale
 And whan that I / haue toold thee forth my tale 172
 Of tribulacion / in maryage
 Of which I am expert in al myn age
 This is to seye / my self hath been the whippe
 Thanne maystow / chese / wheither þat thow wolt sippe
 Of thilke tonne / that I shal abroche 177
 Be war of it / er thow to neigh approche
 ffor I shal telle ensamples / mo than ten
 Who so þat nyle / be war / by othere men 180
 By hym / shal othere men corrected be
 Thise same wordes / writeth Protholome
 Rede in his Almageste / and take it there
 ¶ Dame I wolde pray yow / if youre wyl it were 184
 Seyde this Pardoner / as ye bigan
 Telle forth youre tale / spareth for no man
 And techeth vs yonge men / of youre praktyke
 ¶ Gladly quod she / syn it may yow lyke 188
 But that I praye / to al this compaignye
 If that I speke / after my fantasye
 As taketh nat agrief / of that I seye
 ffor myn entente / nys but for to pleye 192
Now sire / thanne wol I telle yow forth my tale
 As euere / moot I drynke / wyn or Ale
 I shal seye sooth / tho housbondes þat I hadde
 As three of hem were goode / and two were badde 196
 The thre men / were goode / and ryche / and olde [leaf 60, back]
 Vnnethe myghte they / the Statut holde
 In which / that they were bounden vn-to me
 Ye woot wel / what I mene of this pardee 200
 As help me god / I laughe whan I thynke
 How pitously / a nyght I made hem swynke
 And by my fey / I tolde of it no stoor
 They hadde me yeuen / hir land and hir tresoor 204

Me neded nat^t do lenger diligence
 To wynne hir loue / or doon hem reuerence
 They loued me so wel / by god aboue
 That I ne tolde / no deyntee of hir loue 208
 A wys womman / wol bisye hire / euere in oon
 To gete hir loue / ye ther as she hath noon
 But sith I hadde hem / hoolly in myn hond
 And sith that they / hadde yeuen me al hir lond 212
 What sholde I take kepe / hem for to plese
 But it were / for my profit^t and myn ese
 I sette hem awerk^t by my fey
 That many a nyght^t they songen weylawey 216
 The bacon / was nat fet for hem I trowe
 That som men han / in Essex at Donmowe
 I gouerned hem / so wel after my lawe
 That ech of hem / ful blisful was and fawe 220
 To brynge me / gaye thynges fro the ffeyre
 They were ful glad / whan I spak to hem feyre
 ffor god it woot^t I chidde hem spitously
 ¶ Now herkneth / how I bar me proprely 224
 ye wise wyues / that konne vnderstonde
 Thus sholde ye speke / and bere hem wrong on honde
 ffor half so boldely / kan ther no man
 Swere and lye / as a womman kan 228
 I sey nat this / by wyues þat ben wyse
 But if it be / whan they hem mysauyse
 A wys wyf / if that she kan hir good
 Shal bere hym an hond / the Cow is wood 232
 And take witnesse / of hir owene mayde
 Of hire assent^t but herkneth how I sayde
 ¶ Sire olde kaynard / is this thyn array
 Why is / my Neghebores wyf so gay 236
 She is honoured / ouer al ther she goth [leaf 61]
 I sitte at hoom / I haue no thrifty cloth
 What dostow / at my neghebores hous
 Is she so fair / artow so amorous 240

What rowne ye with oure mayde / benedicite
 Sire olde lechour / lat thy Iapes be
 And if I haue / a gossib / or A freend
 With-uten gilt^t ye chiden as a feend 244
 If that I walke / or pleye vn-to his hous
 Thow comest hoom / as dronken as a mous
 And prechest on thy bench / with yuel preef
 Thow seyst to me / it is a greet mescheef 248
 To wedde a poure womman / for costage
 And if that she be ryche / of heigh parage
 Thanne seistow / that it is a tormentrye
 To suffre / hir pryde / and hir malencolye 252
 And if þat she be fair / thow verray knaue
 Thow seist^t that euery holour wol hire haue
 She may no while / in chastitee abyde
 That is assayled / vp-on ech a syde 256
 ¶ Thow seyst^t som folk / desiren vs for richesse
 Somme for oure shape / and somme for oure fairnesse
 And somme / for she kan outhur synge / or daunce
 And somme / for gentillesse / and dalyaunce 260
 Somme for hir handes / and hir armes smale
 Thus goth al to the deuel / by thy tale
 Thow seyst / men may nat kepe a Castel wal
 It may so longe / assaylled been ouer al 264
 And if that she be foul / thow seyst þat she
 Coueiteth euery man / that she may se
 ffor as a Spaynel / she wol on hym lepe
 Til that she fynde / som man hir to chepe 268
 Ne noon so grey goos / goth ther in the lake
 As seistow / wol be with-oute make
 And seyst^t it is an hard thyng / for to wolde
 A thyng / that no man wol his thankes holde 272
 Thus seistow lorel / whan thow goost to bedde
 And that no wys man / nedeth for to wedde
 Ne no man / that entendeth vn-to heuene
 With wilde thonder dynt^t and firy leuene 276

Moote thy welked nekke / be to-broke [leaf 61, back]
 Thow seyst^t that droppying houses / and eek smoke
 And chidyng wyues / maken men to flee
 Out of hir owene houses / a benedicitee: 280
 What eyleth / swich an old man for to chide
 Thow seyst^t we wyues / wil oure vices hyde
 Til we be fast / and thanne we wol hem shewe
 Wel may that be / a prouerbe of a shrewe 284
 Thow seist^t þat Oxen / Asses / hors / and houndes
 They been assayed / at dyuerse stoundes
 Bacynes / lauours / er that men hem bye
 Spoones / stooles / and al swich housbondrye 288
 And so be pottes / clothes / and array
 But folk / of wyues / maken noon assay
 Til they be wedded / olde dotard shrewe
 And thanne seistow / we wil oure vices shewe 292
 Thow seist also / that it displeseth me
 But if that thou / wolt preise my beautee
 And but thou powre / alwey vp-on my face
 And clepe me faire dame / in euery place 296
 And but thou make a feeste / on thilke day
 That I was born / and make me fressh and gay
 And but thou do / to my norice honour
 And to my chambrere / with-Inne my bour 300
 And to my fadres folk / and his allyes
 Thus seistow / olde barel ful of lyes
 And yet^t of oure Apprentice / Iankyn
 ffor his crispe heer / shynyng^t as gold so fyn 304
 And for he squyereth me / bothe vp and down
 Yet hastow caught^t fals suspecioun
 I wil hym nat^t thogh thou were deed to morwe
 ¶ But tel me this / why hidestow with sorwe 308
 The keyes of thy Chestre / away fro me
 It is my good / as wel as thyn pardee
 What wenestow / make an ydiote of oure dame
 Now by that lord / that called is Seint Iame 312

Thow shalt noght bothe / thogh þat thow were wood
 Be maister / of my body / and my good
 That oon thow shalt forgo / maugree thyne eyen
 What helpeth it' of me enquire and spyen 316
 I trowe / thow woldest' lok me in thy chiste [leaf 62]
 Thow sholdest seye / wyf/ go wher thee liste
 Taak youre disport' I nyl leue no talis
 I knowe yow / for a trewe wyf/ Dame Alis 320
 We loue no man / that taketh kepe / or charge
 Wher þat we goon / we wol been at oure large
 Of alle men / yblessed moote he be
 The wise Astrologen / Daun Protholome 324
 That seith this prouerbe / in his Almageste
 Of alle men / his wisdom is hyeste
 That rekketh nat' who hath the world in hond
 By this prouerbe / thow shalt vnderstonde 328
 Haue thow ynogh / what thar thee rekke / or care
 How myrily / that othere folkes fare
 ffor certes / olde dotard / by youre leue
 Ye shal han queynte / right ynogh at eue 332
 He is to greet a nygard / that wil werne
 A man to lighte a candle / at his lanterne
 He shal han / neuer the lasse light pardee
 Haue thow ynogh / thee thar nat pleyne thee 336
 ¶ Thow seist also / that if we make vs gay
 With clothyng' and with precious array
 That it is peril / of oure chastitee
 And yet with sorwe / thow most enforce thee 340
 And seye thise wordes / in thapostles name
 In habit' maad with chastitee and shame
 Ye wommen / shal apparaille yow quod he
 And nat in tressed heer / and gay perree 344
 As perlys / ne with gold / ne clothes ryche
 After thy text' ne after thy rubryche
 I wol nat werke / as muche / as is a gnat'
 Thow seydest this / þat I was lyk a Cat' 348

ffor who so wolde senge / a Cattes skyn
 Thanne wolde the Cat wel dwellen in his In
 And if the Cattes skyn / be slyk and gay
 She wol nat dwelle in house / half a day 352
 But forth she wole / er any day be dawed
 To shewe hir skyn / and goon a Caterwawed
 This is to seye / if I be gay sire shrewe
 I wol renne out my borel for to shewe 356
 Sire olde fool / what helpeth thee tespyen [leaf 62, back]
 Thogh thou preye Argus / with his hundred eyen
 To be my wardecorps / as he kan best
 In feith / he shal nat kepe me / but me lest 360
 Yet koude I make his berd / as mote I thee
 ¶ Thow seydest eek þat ther ben thynges three
 The whiche thynges / troublen al this erthe
 And that no wight may endure the ferthe 364
 O leue sire shrewe / Ihesu shorte thy lyf
 Yet prechestow / and seist an hateful wyf
 Yrekened is / for oon of thise myschaunces
 Been ther / noone othere resemblauches 368
 That ye may likne / youre parables to
 But if a sely wyf be oon of tho
 ¶ Thow liknest eek / wommanes loue to helle
 To bareyne lond / ther water may nat dwelle 372
 Thow liknest it also / to wilde fyr
 The moore it brenneth / the moore it hath desyr
 To consumen euery thyng þat brent wol be
 Thow seist right as wormes shende a tree 376
 Right so a wyf / destroyeth hir housbonde
 This knowen they / that been to wyues bonde
 ¶ Lordynges / right thus / as ye han vnderstonde
 Bar I stifly / myne olde housbondes on honde 380
 That thus they seyden / in hir dronkenesse
 And al was fals / but that I took witnesse
 On Iankyn / and on my Nece also
 O lord / the pyne I dide hem / and the wo 384

fful gitlees / by goddes swete pyne
 ffor as an hors / I koude byte and whyne
 I koude pleyne / and I was in the gilt
 Or ellis / often tyme / I hadde been spilt 388
 Who so that first to Mille comth / first grynt
 I pleyned first so was oure werre stynt
 They were ful glad / to excusen hem ful blyue
 Of thyng of which they neuere agilte hir lyue 392
 Of wenches / wolde I bern hem on honde
 Whan that for syk they myghte vnnethe stonde
 Yet tikled I his herte / for that he
 Wende that I hadde had of hym / so greet chiertee 396
 I swoor / that my walkyng out by nyghte [leaf 63]
 Was for to espye / wenches that he dighte
 Vnder that colour / hadde I many a myrthe
 ffor al swich wit is yeuen vs in oure birthe 400
 Deceite / wepyng spynnyng god hath yeue
 To wommen kyndely / whil they may lyue
 And thus / of o thyng I auante me
 At ende / I hadde the bet in ech degree 404
 By sleighte / or force / or by som maner thyng
 As by continuel murmur / or grucchyng
 Namely abedde / hadden they meschaunce
 Ther wolde I chide / and do hem no plesaunce 408
 I wolde no lenger / in the bed abyde
 If that I felte his arm / ouer my syde
 Til he hadde maad / his raunceon vn-to me
 Thanne wolde I suffre hym / do his nycetee 412
 And ther-fore / euery man / this tale I telle
 Wynne who so may / for al is for to selle
 With empty hond / men may none haukes lure
 ffor wynnyng wolde I al his lust endure 416
 And make me / a feyned appetit
 And yet in bacoñ / hadde I neuere delit
 That made me / that euere I wolde hem chyde
 For thogh the Pope / hadde seten hem bisyde 420

I wolde noght spare hem / at hir owene bord
 ffor by my trouthe / I quytte hem / word for word
 As help me / verray god omnipotent
 Togh I right now / sholde make my testament 424
 I ne owe hem nat a word / that it nys quyt
 I broghte it so aboute / by my wit
 That they moste yeue it vp / as for the beste
 Or ellis / hadde we neuere been in reste 428
 ffor thogh he looked / as a wood leon
 yet sholde he faille / of his conclusiō
 ¶ Thanne wolde I seye / good lief taak keepe
 How mekely / looketh Wilkyn oure scheepe 432
 Com neer my spouse / lat me ba thy cheke
 Ye sholden be / al pacient/ and meke
 And han / a swete spyced conscience
 Sith ye so preche / of Iobes pacience 436
 Suffreth alwey / syn ye so wel kan preche [leaf 63, back]
 And but ye do / certeyn we shal yow teche
 That it is fair / to han a wyf in pees
 Oon of vs two / moste bowen doutelees 440
 And sith a man / is moore resonable
 Than womman is / ye mosten been suffrable
 What eyleth yow / to grucche thus and grone
 Is it for ye wolde haue / my queynte allone 444
 Wy taak it al / lo haue it euey del
 Peter I shrewe yow / but ye loue it wel
 ffor if I wolde selle / my bele chose
 I koude walke / as fressh as is a rose 448
 But I wol kepe it for youre owene tooth
 Ye be to blame / by god I sey yow sooth
 Swiche manere wordes / hadde we on honde
 Now wol I speke / of my ferthe housbonde 452
My ferthe housbonde / was a reuelour
 This is to seyn he hadde a paramour
 And I was yong and ful of ragerye
 Stibourne and strong and ioly as a pye 456

How koude I daunce / to an harpe smale
 And synge ywys / as any nyghtyngale
 Whan I hadde dronke / a draghte of swete wyn
 Metellyus / the foule cherl the swyn 460
 That with a staf / birafte his wyf hir lyf
 ffor she drank' wyn /. though I hadde been his wyf
 Ne sholde nat' han daunted me fro drynke
 And after wyn / on Venus moste I thynke 464
 ffor also siker / as coold engendreth hayl
 A likerous mouth / moste han a likerous tayl
 In womman vynolent / is no defence
 This knowen lechours / by experience 468
 But lord crist' whan þat it remembreth me
 Vp-on my youthe / and on my iolytee
 It tikeleth me / aboute myn herte roote
 Vn-to this day / it dooth myn herte boote 472
 That I haue had my world / as in my tyme
 But age allas / that al wole enuenyme
 Hath me biraft' my beautee / and my pith
 Lat go farwel / the deuel go ther-with 476
 The flour is goon / ther is namoore to telle [leaf 64]
 The bren as I best kan / now moste I selle
 But yet' to be right murye / wol I fonde
 Now wol I tellen / of my ferthe housbonde 480
 ¶ I seye I hadde in herte gret despit
 That he / of any oother had delit
 But he was quyt' by god and by Seint Ioce
 I made hym / of the same wode a troce 484
 Nat of my body / in no foul manere
 But certeynly / I made folk swich chiere
 That in his owene grece / I made hym frye
 ffor angre / and for verray Ialousye 488
 By god / in erthe / I was his purgatorie
 ffor which I hope / his soule be in glorie
 ffor god it woot' he sat ful ofte and soong'
 Whan þat his shoo / ful bitterly hym wroong' 492

Ther was no wight/ saue god and he / þat wiste
 In many wise / how soore I hym twiste
 He deyde / whan I cam fro Ierusalem
 And lyth ygraue / vnder the roode beem 496
 Al is his toumbe / noght so curyus
 As was the sepulcre / of hym Daryus
 Which that Appellus / wroghte subtilly
 It nys but wast to burye hym preciously 500
 Lat hym fare wel / god gyue his soule reste
 He is now / in his graue / and in his cheste
Now / of my fifthe housbonde / wol I telle
 God lat his soule / neuere come in helle 504
 And yet was he to me / the mooste shrewe
 That feele I / on my rybbes al by rewe
 And euere shal / vn-to myn endyng day
 But in oure bed / he was so fressh and gay 508
 And ther with al / so wel koude he me glose
 Whan that he wolde / han my bele chose
 That thogh he hadde me bet on euery bon
 He koude wynne agayn / my loue anon 512
 I trowe I loued hym best for that he
 Was of his loue / daungerous to me
 We wommen han / if that I shal nat lye
 In this matere / a queynte fantasye 516
 Wayte what thyng we may nat lightly haue [leaf 64, back]
 Ther after / wol we crye al day / and craue
 fforbede vs thyng and that desiren we
 Preesse on vs faste / and thanne wol we fle 520
 With daunger / oute we / al oure chaffare
 Greet prees at Market / maketh deere ware
 And to greet chéepe / is holden at litel prys
 This knoweth euery womman / that is wys 524
 ¶ My fifthe housbonde / god his soule blesse
 Which þat I took for loue / and no rychesse
 He som tyme / was a clerk of Oxenford
 And hadde laft scole / and wente at hom to bord 528

With my gossyb / dwellyng in oure town
 God haue hir soule / hir name was Alisoun
 She knew myn herte / and eek my pryuetee
 Bet than oure parysshe preest^t as mote I thee 532
 To hire biwreyed I / my conseil al
 ffor hadde myn housbonde / pissed on a wal
 Or doon a thyng^t / that sholde haue cost his lyf
 To hire / and to another worthy wyf 536
 And to my Nece / which þat I loued wel
 I wolde han toold / his conseil euery del
 And so I dide / ful often / god it woot^t
 That made his face / often reed and hoot 540
 ffor verray shame / and blamed hym self^t for he
 Hadde toold to me / so greet a pryuetee
 ¶ And so bifel / that ones in a lente
 So often tymes / I to my gossyb wente 544
 ffor euere yet^t I louede to be gay
 And for to walke / in March / Auerylle / and May
 ffrom hous to hous / to here sondry tales
 That Iankyn Clerk / and my gossyb dame Alys 548
 And I my self / in to the feeldes wente
 Myn housbonde was at london / al that lente
 I hadde / the bettre leyser for to pleye
 And for to se / and eek for to be seye 552
 Of lusty folk^t what wiste I wher my grace
 Was shapen for to be / or in what place
 Ther-fore / I made my visitacions
 To Vigilies / and to processions 556
 To prechyng^t eek / and to thise pilgrymages [leaf 65]
 To pleyes of myrales / and to mariages
 And wered vp on / my gaye scarlet gytes
 Thise wormes / ne thise moththes / ne thise Mytes 560
 Vp-on my peril / frete hem neuer a del
 And wostow / why / for they were vused wel
 ¶ Now wol I tellen forth / what happed me
 I seye / that in the feeldes walked we 564

Til trewely / we hadde swich daliaunce
 This clerk/ and I / that of my purueiaunce
 I spak to hym / and seyde hym / how that he
 If I were wydewe / sholde wedde me 568
 ffor certeynly / I seye for no bobaunce
 Yet was I neuere / with-uten purueiaunce
 Of mariage / nof othere thynges eek /
 I holde a mouses herte / noght worth a leek^t 572
 That hath but oon hole / for to sterte to
 And if that faille / thanne is al y-do
 [I bar him on honde / he had enchaunted me [Camb. Univ. MS
 Dd. 4. 24,
 My Dame taught me / that sotilte leaf 73, back, line 21]
 And eke I seide / I mette of him al nyght [Not in B. M. Ad-
 dit. 5140, lf 96; or
 Harl. 7335, lf 68,
 He wold han slayn me / as I lay vp right bk; or Harl. 1758,
 lf 95; or Sloane
 1685, lf 110, bk;
 And al my bed / was ful of verray blod MS Reg. 18 C ii,
 lf 112; Sloane
 But 3et I hope / that 3e shuln do me good 1686, lf 127, bk;
 ffor blod bytokeneth gold / as me was taught (Preamble not in
 Harl. 1239; Pr.
 And al was fals / I dremed of it right nought and Tale not in
 Shirley's Harl.
 But as I folwed ay / my dames loore 7333;) not in
 Camb. Univ. MS
 Mm 2. 5.]
 As wel of that / as of othere thynges more.] [Camb. Dd. 4. 24
 extract stops]
 But now sire / lat me se / what shal I seyn
 A .ha. by god / I haue my tale ageyn
 ¶ Whan that my fourthe housbonde / was a beere
 I weep algate / and made sory cheere 588
 As wyues mooten / for it is vsage
 And with my couerchief / couered my visage
 But for that I was / purueyed of a make
 I wepte but smal / and that I vndertake 592
 ¶ To chirche was myn housbonde / born a morwe
 With neghebores / that for hym maden sorwe
 And Iankyn oure clerk / was oon of tho
 As help me god / whan that I saw hym go 596
 After the beere / me thoughte he hadde a payre
 Of legges and of feet^t so clene and fayre
 That al myn herte / I gaf vn-to his hoold
 He was I trowe / twenty wynter oold 600

And I was fourty / if I shal seye sooth
 But yit I hadde alwey / a coltes tooth
 Gat tothed I was / & that bicam me weel
 I hadde the preente / of Seynt Venus seel 604
 As help me god I was a lusty oon
 And fayr/ and ryche / and yong^t and wel bigoon
 And trewely / as myne housbondes tolde me [leaf 65, back]
 I hadde the beste quonyam / myghte be 608
 [ffor certes I am / al Venerien [Cambr. Univ. MS Dd. 4. 24, lf 74, line 9]
 In feelyng / and myn hert is Marcien] [Not in Addit. 5140,
 Venus me 3af my lust / my likerousnesse 7335, lf 69; or Harl.
 And Mars 3af me / my sturdy hardynesse] 1685, lf 111; MS Reg.
 Myn ascendent^t was Taur / and Mars ther-Inne 18 C ii, lf 112, bk;
 Allas / allas / that euere loue was synne Sloane 1686, lf 128;
 I folwed ay / myn Inclinacioñ or Cambr. Mm. 2. 5.]
 By vertu / of my constellacioñ 616
 That made me / I koude noght withdrawe
 My chambre of Venus / from a good felawe
 [3et haue I Mars merk / vp-on my face [Cambr. Univ. MS Dd. 4. 24,
 And also / in a nother pryue place leaf 74, line 19]
 ffor god so wysely / be my sauacioun [Not in Addit. 5140, lf 96, bk;
 I louede neuere / by no discrecioun or Harl. 7335, lf 69; or
 But euere folwed / myn appetit^t Sloane 1685, lf 111; MS Reg.
 Al were he short / long blak or whizt 18 C ii, lf 112, bk; Sloane
 I toke no kepe / so that he liked me 1686, lf 128; or Cambr. Mm.
 How poore he was / ne eke of what degree] 2. 5.]
 ¶ What sholde I seye / but at the Monthes ende
 This ioly clerk / Iankyn þat was so hende 628
 Hath wedded me / with greet solempnytee
 And to hym yaf I / al the lond and fee
 That euere was me yeuen / ther bifore
 But afterward / repented me ful sore 632
 He nolde suffre / no thyng of my list^t
 By god / he smoot me ones / on the lyst^t
 ffor that I rente / out of his book a leef
 That of the strook/ myn ere weex al deef 636

Stibourne I was / as is a leonesse
 And of my tonge / a verray Iangleresse
 And walke I wolde / as I hadde doon biforn
 ffrom hous to hous / al-thogh he hadde it sworn 640
 ffor which / he often tymes / wolde preche
 And me / of olde Romain gestes teche
 How he Symplicius Gallus / lafte his wif
 And hire forsook for terme of al his lif 644
 Noght but for open heueded he hir say
 Lokynge out at his dore / vp-on a day
 ¶ Another Romain / tolde he me by name
 That for his wyf / was at a Someres game 648
 With-uten his wityng / he forsook hire eke
 And thanne wolde he / vp-on his Bible seke
 That ilke prouerbe / of Ecclesiaste
 Where he comandeth / and forbedeth faste 652
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf / go roule aboute
 Thanne wold he seye right thus / with-uten doute
 Who so þat buyldeth his hous / al of salwes
 And priketh his blynde hors / ouer the falwes } 656
 And suffreth his wyf / to go seken halwes } *nota*
 Is worthy / to ben hanged on the galwes
 But al for noght I sette noght an hawe [leaf 66]
 Of his prouerbe / nof his olde sawe 660
 Ny wolde nat of hym corrected be
 I hate hym / þat my vices telleth me
 And so doon mo / god woot of vs than I
 This made hym / with me wood al outrely 664
 I nolde noght forbere hym / in no cas
 ¶ Now wol I sey yow sooth / by Seint Thomas
 Why þat I rente / out of his book a leef
 ffor which / he smoot me so / þat I was deaf 668
 He hadde a book / þat gladly nyght and day
 ffor his disport he wolde rede alway
 He clepyd it Valerie and Theofraste
 At which book / he logh alwey ful faste 672

And eek ther was / som tyme a clerk at Rome
 A Cardynal / that highte Seint Ierome
 That made a book^t agayn Iovinian
 In which book^t eek ther was Tertulan 676
 Crisippus / Trotula / and Helowys
 That was Abbesse / nat fer fro Parys
 And eek the parables / of Salomon
 Ouydes art^t and bokes many on 680
 And alle thise were bounden / in o volume
 And euery nyght and day / was his custume
 Whan he hadde leyser / and vacacioñ
 ffrom oother / worldly ocupacioñ 684
 To reden in this book^t of wikked wyues
 He knew of hem / mo legendes and lyues
 Than been of goode wyues in the Bible
 ffor trusteth wel / it is an impossible 688
 That any clerk^t wol speke good of wyues
 But if it be / of holy seintes lyues
 Nof noon oother womman / neuer the mo
 Who peynted the leon^d / tel me who 692
 By god / if wommen / hadden writen stories
 As clerkes han / with-Inne hir oratories
 They wolde han writen of men / moore wikkednesse
 Than al the mark of Adam may redresse 696
 The children / of Mercurie and Venus
 Been in hir wirkyng/ ful contrarius
 Mercurie loueth / wysdam and science [leaf 66, back]
 And Venus loueth / Riot and dispence 700
 And for hir diuerse / disposicioñ
 Ech faileth / in ootheres exaltacioñ
 And thus god woot^t Mercurie is desolat
 In pisces / wher venus is exaltat^t 704
 And venus faileth / ther Mercurie is reysed
 Ther-fore no womman / of no clerk is preysed
 The clerk^t whan he is old / and may noght do
 Of venus werkes / worth his olde sho 708

Thanne sit he doun / and writ in his dotage
 That wommen / kan nat kepe hir mariage
 ¶ But now to purpos / why I tolde thee
 That I was beten / for a book pardee 712
 Vp-on a nyght I ankyn þat was oure sire
 Redde on his book / as he sat by the fire
 Of Eua first / þat for hir wikkednesse
 Was al mankynde / broght to wrecchednesse 716
 [ffor which that ihesu crist / him self was slayn [Camb. Univ. MS Dd. 4. 24, lf 75, l. 26]
 That bought vs / with his hert blod a-gayn [Not in Mm. 2. 5; not in Harl. 7335, lf 70, bk; Harl. 1758, lf 96; Ad. 5140, lf 98; Sloane 1685, lf 112, bk; Sloane 1686, lf 129, bk.]
 Loo heere expres of wommen / may 3e fynde
 That womman was the losse / of al mankynde]
 ¶ Tho redde he me / how Sampson loste his herys
 Slepynge / his lemman kitte it with hir sherys
 Thurgh which treson / loste he bothe hise eyen
 ¶ Tho redde he me / if that I shal nat lyen 724
 Of hercules / and of his Dianyre
 That caused hym / to sette hym self a fyre
 ¶ No thyng forgat he / the sorwe and wo
 That Socrates / hadde with his wyues two 728
 How Xantippa / caste pisse vp-on his heed
 This sely man sat stille / as he were deed
 He wipte his heed / namoore dorste he seyn
 But er that thonder stynte / comth a reyn 732
 ¶ Of Phasifpha / that was the queene of Crete
 ffor shrewednesse / hym thoughte the tale swete
 ffy spek namoore / it is a grisly thyng
 Of hire horrible lust and hir likyng 736
 ¶ Of Clitermystra / for hir lecherye
 That falsly / made hir housbonde for to dye
 He redde it with ful good deuocioun
 ¶ He tolde me eek for what occasioun 740
 Amphiorax / at Thebes loste his lyf
 Myn housbonde / hadde a legende of his wyf
 ¶ Exiphilem / that for an Ouche of gold [leaf 67]
 Hath priuely / vn-to the grekys told 744

Wher þat hir housbonde / hidde hym in a place
 ffor which / he hadde at Thebes sory grace
 ¶ Of lyma tolde he me / and of lucie
 They bothe / made hir housbondes for to dye 748
 That oon for loue / that oother was for hate
 Lyma hir housbonde / on an euen late
 Empoysoned hath / for þat she was his fo
 Lucy a likerous / loued hir housbonde so 752
 That for he sholde alwey / vp-on hir thynke
 She yaf hym / swich a manere loue drynke
 That he was deed / er it were by the morwe
 And thus algates / housbondes han sorwe 756
 ¶ Thanne tolde he me / how þat oon latumyus
 Compleygned / vn-to his felawe Arrius
 That in his gardyn / growed swich a tree
 On which he seyde / how þat hise wyues thre 760
 Honged hem self / for hertes despitus
 ¶ O leue brother / quod this Arrius
 yif me a plante / of thilke blessed tree
 And in my gardyn / planted shal it be 764
 ¶ Of latter date of wyues / hath he red
 That somme han slayn / hir housbondes in hir bed
 And lete hir lechour / dighte hire al the nyght
 Whan þat the corps / lay in the floor vp ryght 768
 ¶ And somme / han dryuen nayles in hir brayn
 Whil þat they sleepe / and thus they han hem slayn
 ¶ Somme han hem yeuen poyoun / in hir drynke
 He spak moore harm / than herte may bithynke 772
 And ther with al / he knew of mo prouerbes
 Than in this world / ther growen gras or herbes
 Bet is quod he / thyn habitacioun
 Be with a leon / or a foul dragoun 776
 Than with a womman / vsyng for to chide
 Bet is quod he / hye in the roof abyde
 Than with an angry wyf / down in the hous
 They been so wikked / and contrarious 780

They haten / that hir housbondes loueth ay
 He seyde / a womman / cast hir shame away
 Whan she cast of hir smok^t and forther mo [leaf 67, back]
 A fair womman / but she be chaast also 784
 Is lyk a gold ryng^t in a sowes nose
 Who wolde wene / or who wolde suppose
 The wo / that in myn herte was and pyne
 ¶ And whan I say / he wolde neuere fyne 788
 To reden / on this cursed book al nyght^t
 Al sodeynly / thre leues / haue I plyght^t
 Out of his book^t right as he radde / and eke
 I with my fist^t so took [him] on the cheke 792
 That in oure fyr / he fil bakward adown
 And he vp stirte / as dooth a wood leoun
 And with his fest / he smoot me on the heed
 That in the floor / I lay as I were deed 796
 And whan he say / how stille þat I lay
 He was agast^t and wolde haue fled his way
 Til atte laste / out of my swowgh I brayde
 O hastow slayn me / false thief I sayde 800
 And for my land / thus hastow mordred me
 Er I be deed / yet wol I kisse thee
 ¶ And neer he cam / and kneled faire adown
 And seyde / deere suster Alisoun 804
 As help me god / I shal thee neuere smyte
 That I haue doon / it is thy self to wyte
 fforyeue it me / and that I thee biseke
 And yet eft soones / I hitte hym on the cheke 808
 And seyde thief / thus muchel am I wreke
 Now wol I dye / I may no lenger speke
 ¶ But at the laste / with muchel care and wo
 We fille acorded / by vs seluen two 812
 He yaf me / al the brydel in myn hond
 To han the gouernance / of hous and lond
 And of his tonge / and his hond also
 And made hym brenne his book^t anon right tho 816

And whan that I hadde / geten vn-to me
 By maistrye / al the soueraynetee
 And þat he seyde / myn owene trewe wyf
 Do as thee lust^t the terme of al thy lyf 820
 Keepe thyn honour / and keepe eek myn estaat
 After that day / we hadde neuere debaat/
 God help me so / I was to hym as kynde [leaf 68]
 As any wyf / from Denmark^t vn-to Inde 824
 And also trewe / and so was he to me
 I pray to god / that sit in magestee
 So blesse his soule / for his mercy deere
 Now wol I seye my tale / if ye wol heere 828

[*The Wrangle between the Summoner and Friar.*]

The frere logh / whan he hadde herd al this
 Now dame quod he / so haue I ioie / or blys
 This is a long preamble / of a tale
 And whan the Somnour / herde the frere gale 832
 ¶ Lo quod the Somnour / goddes armes two
 A frere / wol entremette hym euere mo
 Loo goode men / a flye / and eek a frere
 Wol falle in euery dyssh and matere 836
 What spekestow / of preambulacioun
 What amble / or trotte / or pees / or go sit down
 Thow lettest oure disport^t in this manere
 ¶ Ye woltow so / sir Somnour / quod the frere 840
 Now by my feith / I shal er that I go
 Telle of a Somnour / swich a tale / or two
 That al the folk / shal laughen in this place
 ¶ Now ellis frere / I wol bishrewe thy face 844
 Quod this Somnour / and I bishrewe me
 But if I telle tales / two or thre
 Of freres / er I come to Sydyngborne
 That I shal make / thyn herte for to morne 848

ffor wel I woot^t thy pacience is gon

¶ Oure hoost^t cryde pees / and that anon

And seyde / lat the womman / telle hir tale

Ye fare as folk/ that dronken ben of Ale 852

Do dame / tel forth youre tale / and that is best^t

¶ Al reddy sire quod she / right as yow lest^t

If I haue licence / of this worthy frere

¶ Yis dame quod he / tel forth / and I wol heere 856

¶ Here endeth the prologe of the Wyf of Bathe ♀

¶ Here bigynneth the tale / of the Wyf of Bathe 
[leaf 68, back]

IN tholde dayes / of the kyng Arthour
Of which that Britons / speken greet honour
Al was this land / fulfild of ffairye
The Elf queene / with hir ioly compaignye 860
Daunced ful ofte / in many a grene mede
This was / the olde opynyon / as I rede
I speke / of many hundred yerys ago
But now kan no man / se none Elues mo 864
ffor now the grete charitee / and prayeres
Of lymytours / and othere holy freres
That serchen / euery lond and euery streem
As thikke / as motes in the sonne beem 868
Blessynge halles / chambres / kichenen boures
Citees / Burghes / Castels / hye Toures
Thropes / Bernes / Shipnes / dayeryes
This maketh / þat ther been no fairyes 872
ffor ther as wont to walken was an Elf
Ther walketh now / the lymytour hym self
In vndermelys / and in morwenynges
And seith his matyns / and his holy thynges 876
As he gooth / in his lymytacioun
Wommen / may go saufly vp and down
In euery bussh / or vnder euery tree
Ther is noon oother Incubus / but he 880
And he ne wol doon hem / but dishonour
¶ And so bifel / that this kyng Arthour
Hadde in his hous / a lusty Bachiler
That on a day / cam ridyng fro Ryuer 884

And happed that allone / as he was born
 He say a mayde / walkynge hym biforn
 Of which mayde / anoon maugree hir hed
 By verray force / he rafte hir maydenhed 888
 ffor which oppressioun / was swich clamour
 And swich pursuyte / vn-to the kyng Arthour
 That dampned was this knyght/ for to be deed
 By cours of lawe / and sholde han lost his heed 892
 Par auenture / swich was the statut tho [leaf 69]
 But that the queene / and othere ladyes mo
 So longe preyden / the kyng of grace
 Til he his lyf / hym graunted in the place 896
 And yaf hym to the queene / al at hir wille
 To chese / wheither she wolde / hym saue or spille
 The queen thanked the kyng with al hir might
 And after this / thus spak she to the knyght 900
 Whan that she saw / hir tyme vp-on a day
 Thow standest yet quod she / in swich array
 That of thy lyf / yet hastow no suretee
 I graunte thee lyf / if thow kanst tellen me 904
 What thyng is it þat wommen moost desiren
 Be war / and keepe thy nekke boon from Iren
 And if thow kanst nat / tellen me anon
 Yet wol I yeue thee leue / for to gon 908
 A twelf monthe and a day / to seche and lere
 An answeere suffisant in this matere
 And seuretee wol I han / er that thow pace
 Thy body / for to yelden / in this place 912
 ¶ Wo was this knyght/ and sorwefully he siketh
 But what he may nat doon / al as hym liketh
 And atte laste / he chees hym for to wende
 And come agayn / right at the yeres ende 916
 With swich answeere / as god wolde hym purueye
 And taketh his leue / and wendeth forth his weye
 He seketh euery hous / and euery place
 Where as he hopeth / for to fynde grace 920

To lerne / what thyng^t wommen loue moost
 But he ne koude / arryuen in no coost^t
 Where as he myghte fynde / in this matere
 Two creatures / acordyng^t in feere 924
 ¶ Somme seyden / wommen louen best richesse
 Somme seyde honour / somme seyde Iolifnesse
 Somme riche array / somme lust abedde
 And ofte tyme / to be widwe and wedde 928
 Somme seyde / that oure herte / is moost esed
 Whan that we been / yflatered and yplesed
 He gooth ful ny the sothe / I wol nat lye
 A man shal wynne vs best / with flaterye 932
 And with attendaunce / and with bisynesse [leaf 69, back]
 Been we ylymed / bothe moore and lesse
 ¶ And somme seyn / þat we louen best
 ffor to be free / and do as vs lest^t 936
 And that no man / repreue vs of oure vice
 But seye þat we be wise / and no thyng nyce
 ffor trewely / ther is noon of vs alle
 If any wight^t wolde clawe vs on the galle 940
 That we nyl like / for he seith vs sooth
 Assay / and he shal fynde it^t that so dooth
 ffor be we / neuer so vicious / with-Inne
 We wol be holden wise / and clene of synne 944
 ¶ And somme seyn / that greet delit han we
 ffor to be holden / stable and eek secree
 And in o purpos / stedefastly to dwelle
 And nat biwreye thyng^t that men vs telle 948
 But that tale / is nat worth a Rake stele
 Pardee / we wommen / konne no thyng hele
 Witnesse on Mida / wol ye heere the tale
 ¶ Ouyde / amonges othere thynges smale 952
 Seyde / Mida / hadde vnder his longe herys
 Growynge vp on his heed / two Asses erys
 The which vice he hidde / as he best myghte
 fful sotilly / from euery mannes sighte 956

That saue his wyf / ther wiste of it na mo
 He loued hire moost^t and trusted hire also
 He preyed hire / that to no creature
 She sholde tellen / of his diffigure 960
 ¶ She swoor hym nay / for al this world to wynne
 She nolde do / that vileynye / or syn
 To make hir housbonde / han so foul a name
 She nolde nat telle it^t for hir owene shame 964
 But nathelees / hir thoughte þat she dyde
 That she so longe / sholde a conseil hyde
 Hir thoughte / it swal so soore aboute hir herte
 That nedely / som word / hir moste asterte 968
 And sith / she dorste nat telle it to no man
 Doun to a Marys / faste by she ran
 Til she cam there / hir herte was a fyre
 And as a Bitore / bombleth in the Myre 972
 She leyde hir mouth / vn-to the water down [leaf 70]
 Biwrey me nat^t thow water with thy sown
 Quod she / to thee I telle it and namo
 Myn housbonde / hath longe Asses erys two 976
 Now is myn herte al hool / now it is oute
 I myghte no lenger / kepe it out of doute
 Heere may ye see / thogh we a tyme abyde
 Yet out it moot^t we kan no conseil hyde 980
 The remenant of the tale / if ye wol heere
 Redeth Ouyde / and ther ye may it leere
 ¶ This knyght^t of which my tale is specially
 Whan that he say / he myghte nat come ther by 984
 This is to seye / what wommen louen moost^t
 With-Inne his brest^t ful sorweful was the goost
 But hom he gooth / he myghte nat soiorne
 The day was come / that homward moste he torne 988
 And in his wey / it happed hym to ryde
 In al this care / vnder a fforest syde
 Wher as he say / vp on a daunce go
 Of ladyes .xxiiij. and yet mo 992

Toward the whiche daunce / he drow ful yerne
 In hope / that som wisdom sholde he lerne
 But *certeynly* / er he cam fully there
 Vanysshed was this daunce / he nyste where 996
 No creature say he / that bar lyf
 Saue on the grene / he say sittynge a wyf
 A fouler wight^t ther may no man deuyse
 Agayn the knyght^t this olde wyf gan ryse 1000
 And seyde sire knyght^t heer forth ne lyth no wey
 Tel me / what þat ye seken by youre fey
 Par auenture / it may the bettre be
 This olde folk^t konne muchel thyng quod she 1004
 ¶ My leue moder / quod this knyght^t *certeyn*
 I nam but deed / but if that I kan seyn
 What thyng it is / that wommen moost desire
 Koude ye me wisse / I wolde wel quyte youre hyre 1008
 ¶ Plight me thy trouthe / here in myn hand quod she
 The nexte thyng^t that I requere thee
 Thow shalt it do / if it lye in thy myght^t
 And I wol telle it yow / er it be nyght^t 1012
 ¶ Haue here my trouthe / quod the knyght I graunte [1f 70, bk]
 ¶ Thanne quod she / I dar me wel auaunte
 Thy lyf is sauf/ for I wole stonde ther by
 Vp-on my lyf/ the queene wol seye as I 1016
 Lat see / which is the proudeste of hem alle
 That wereth on / a couerchief / or a calle
 That dar seye nay / of that I shal thee teche
 Lat vs go forth / with-uten lenger speche 1020
 Tho rowned she / a pistel in his ere
 And bad hym to be glad / and haue no fere
 ¶ Whan they be comen to the Court^t this knyght^t
 Seyde / he hadde holde his day / as he had hight^t 1024
 And redy was his answer / as he sayde
 fful many a noble wyf^t and many a mayde
 And many a widwe / for þat they ben wise
 The queene hir self / sittynge as Iustise 1028

Assembled been / this answe're for to here
 And afterward / this knyght was bode appere
 To euery wight comanded was silence
 And that the knyght sholde telle in audience 1032
 What thyng that worldly wommen louen best
 This knyght ne stood nat stille as dooth a best
 But to his question / anon answerde
 With manly voys / that al the court it herd 1036
 ¶ My lige lady / generally quod he
 Wommen desire / to haue souereyntee
 As wel / ouer hir housbonde / as hir loue
 And for to been in maistrie / hym aboue 1040
 This is youre mooste desir / thogh ye me kille
 Dooth as yow list I am here at youre wille
 ¶ In al the Court ne was ther wyf ne mayde
 Ne wydwe / that contraryed that he sayde 1044
 But seyden / he was worthy han his lyf
 ¶ And with that word / vp stirte that olde wyf
 Which that the knyght say sittyng on the grene
 Mercy quod she / my souereyn lady queene 1048
 Er that youre Court departe / do me right
 I taughte this answe're / vn-to the knyght
 ffor which / he plighte me his trouthe there
 The firste thyng I wolde hym requere 1052
 He wolde it do / if it laye in his myght [leaf 71]
 Bifore the court thanne preye I thee sire knyght
 Quod she / that thow me take vn-to thy wyf
 ffor wel thow woost that I haue kept thy lyf 1056
 If I seye fals / sey nay vp-on thy fey
 ¶ This knyght answerde / alas and weilawey
 I woot right wel / that swich was my biheste
 ffor goddes loue / as chees a newe requeste 1060
 Taak al my good / and lat my body go
 ¶ Nay thanne quod she / I shrewe vs bothe two
 ffor thogh þat I be foul / old / and poore
 I nolde for al the metal / ne for oore 1064

That vnder erthe is graue / or lith aboue
 But if thy wyf I were / and eek thy loue
 ¶ My loue quod he / nay my dampnaciō
 Allas / that any of my naciō 1068
 Sholde euere / so foule disparaged be
 But al for noght^t thende is this / that he
 Constreyned was / he nedes moste hir wedde
 And taketh his olde wyf / and goth to bedde 1072
 ¶ Now wolden som men / seye *par* auenture
 That for my necligence / I do no cure
 To tellen yow / the ioie / and al tharray
 That at the feste / was that ilke day 1076
 To which thyng^t shortly / answer I shal
 I seye / ther nas no ioie / ne feste at al
 Ther nas but heuynesse / and muche sorwe
 ffor priuely / he wedded hire on morwe 1080
 And al day after / hidde hym as an Owle
 So wo was hym / his wyf looked so foule
 ¶ Greet was the wo / the knyght hadde in his thoght^t
 Whan he was with his wyf / a bedde ybrought^t 1084
 He walweth / and he turneth to and fro
 His olde wyf / lay smylyng euere mo
 And seyde / o deere housbonde benedicite
 ffareth euery knyght thus with his wyf / as ye 1088
 Is this the lawe / of kyng Arthures hous
 Is euery knyght of his / thus daungerous
 I am youre owene loue / and youre wyf
 I am she / which that saued hath youre lyf 1092
 And *certes* / yet ne dide I yow neuere vnright^t [leaf 71, back]
 Why fare ye thus with me / this firste nyght^t
 Ye faren lyk a man / hadde lost his wit
 What is my gilt / for goddes loue tel it 1096
 And it shal ben amended / if I may
 ¶ Amended quod this knyght^t allas nay / nay
 It wol nat ben amended neuere mo
 Thow art so loothly / and so old also 1100

And ther-to comen / of so lowe a kynde
 That litel wonder is / thogh I walwe and wynde
 So wolde god / myn herte wolde breste
 ¶ Is this quod she / the cause of youre vnreste 1104
 ¶ Ye certeynly quod he / no wonder is
 ¶ Now sire quod she / I koude amende al this
 If that me liste / er it were dayes thre
 So wel ye myghte / bere yow vn-to me 1108
 ¶ But for ye speken of swich gentillesse ¶ *Nota bene.*
 As is descended / out of old richesse
 That therefore / sholden ye be gentil men
 Swich errogañce / is nat worth an hen 1112
 Looke who þat is / moost vertuous alway
 Pryuee and apert^t and moost entendeth ay
 To do / the gentil dedes / þat he kan
 Taak hym / for the gentileste man 1116
 Crist/ wol we clayme of hym oure gentillesse
 Nat of oure eldres / for hir old richesse
 ffor thogh they yeue vs / al hir heritage
 ffor which we clame / to been of hir parage 1120
 Yet may they nat biquethe / for no thyng^t
 To noon of vs / hir vertuous lyuyng^t
 That made hem / gentil men ycalled be
 And bad vs / folwen hem in swich degree 1124
 ¶ Wel kan / the wise poete of fflorence
 That highte Dant^t speken in this sentence
 Lo / in swich manere rym / is Dantes tale
 fful selde vp riseth / by his brañches smale 1128
 Prowesse of man / for god of his prowesse
 Wole /. that of hym / we clayme oure gentillesse
 ffor of oure eldres / may we no thyng clayme
 But temporel thyng^t that man may hurte and mayme 1132
 Eek euery wight^t woot this as wel I [leaf 72]
 If gentillesse / were planted naturelly
 Vn-to a certeyn lynage / doun the lyne
 Pryuee and apert^t thanne wolde they neuere fyne 1136

To doon / of gentilesse / the faire office
 They myghte do / no vileynye or vice
 ¶ Taak fyr / and bere it in the derkeste hous
 Bitwix this / and the mount of kaukasous 1140
 And lat men shette the dores / and go thenne
 Yet wol the fyr / as faire lye and brenne
 As twenty thousand men / myghte it biholde
 His office naturel / ay wol it holde 1144
 Vp peril of my lyf til that it dye
 Here may ye se wel / how þat genterye
 Is nat annexed / to possession
 Sith folk ne doon hir operacion 1148
 Alwey / as dooth the fyr lo in his kynde
 ffor god it woot men may wel often fynde
 A lordes sone / do shame and vileynye
 And he þat wol han prys / of his gentrye 1152
 ffor he was born / of a gentil hous
 And hadde hise eldres / noble and vertuous
 And nyl hym seluen / do no gentil dedis
 Ne folwen his gentil Auncestre / that deed is 1156
 He nys nat gentil / be he duc or Erl
 ffor vileynes synful dedes / maken a cherl
 ffor gentilesse / nys but renomee
 Of thyne Auncestres / for hir hye bountee 1160
 Which is straunge thyng for thy persone
 Thy gentilesse / cometh fro god allone
 Thanne comth / oure verray gentilesse of grace
 It was no thyng biquethe vs / with oure place 1164
 Thenketh how noble / as seith Valerius
 Was thilke / Tullius hostillius
 That out of pouerte / roos to heigh noblesse
 Redeth Senek and redeth eek Boece 1168
 Ther shul ye seen expres / þat no drede is
 That he is gentil / that dooth gentil dedis
 And ther-fore / leue housbonde / I thus conclude
 Al were it that myne Auncestres weren rude 1172

Yet may the hye god / and so hope I / [leaf 72, back]
 Graunte me grace / to lyuen *vertuously*
 Thanne am I gentil / whan þat I bigynne
 To lyuen *vertuously* / and weyue synne 1176
 ¶ And ther as ye / of pouerte me repreue
 The hye god / on whom þat we bileue
 In wilful pouerte / chees to lyue his lyf
 And certes euery man / mayden / or wyf 1180
 May vnderstonde / þat Ihesus heuene kyng
 Ne wolde nat chese / a vicious lyuyng
 Glad pouerte / is an honeste thyng *certeyn*
 This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn 1184
 Who so þat halt hym payd / of his pouerte
 I holde hym riche / al hadde he nat a sherte
 He that coueiteth / is a poure wight
 ffor he wolde han / that is nat in his myght 1188
 But he þat noght hath / ne coueiteth haue
 Is riche / al thogh we holde hym but a knaue
 Verray pouerte / is synne *propely*
 Iuuenal seith / of pouerte myrily 1192
 ¶ The poure man / whan he gooth by the weye
 Biforn the theues / he may synge and pleye
 Pouerte is hateful good / and as I gesse
 A ful greet bryngere / out of bisynesse 1196
 A greet amendere eek of Sapience
 To hym / that taketh it in pacience
 Pouerte is thyng al thogh it seme elenge
 Possession / that no wight wol chalenge 1200
 Pouerte ful often / whan a man is lowe
 Maketh hym self / and eek his god to knowe
 Pouerte / a spectacle is / as thynketh me
 Thurgh which he may / his verray freendes se 1204
 And therfore sire / syn þat I noght yow greue
 Of my pouerte / namoore ye me repreue
 ¶ Now sire / of elde ye repreue me
 And certes sire / thogh noon auctoritee 1208

Were in no book/ ye gentils of honour
 Seyn / þat men an old wight sholde doon fauour
 And clepe hym fader / for youre gentillesse
 And Auctours / shal I fynden / as I gesse 1212
 ¶ Now ther ye seye / that I am foul and old [leaf 73]
 Thanne drede yow noght to been a Cokewold
 ffor filthe and elde / al-so mote I thee
 Been grete wardeyns / vp-on chastitee 1216
 But natheles / syn I knowe youre delit/
 I shal fulfille / youre worldly appetit
 ¶ Chees now quod she / oon of thise thinges tweye
 To han me foul and old / til that I deye 1220
 And be to yow / a trewe humble wyf
 And neuere yow displese / in al my lyf
 Or ellis / ye wol han me / yong and fair
 And take youre auenture / of the repair 1224
 That shal be to youre hous / by cause of me
 Or in som oother place / may wel be
 Now chees your seluen / wheither þat yow liketh
 ¶ This knyght auyseth hym / and soore siketh 1228
 But atte laste / he seyde in this manere
 My lady and my loue / and wyf so deere
 I putte me / in youre wise gouernañce
 Cheseth youre self which þat may be moost plesañce 1232
 And moost honour to yow / and me also
 I do no fors / the wheither of the two
 ffor as yow liketh / it suffiseth me
 ¶ Than haue I gete / of yow maistrye / quod she 1236
 Syn I may chese / and gouerne as me lest
 ¶ Ye certes wyf quod he / I holde it best
 ¶ Kys me quod she / we be no lenger wrothe
 ffor by my trouthe / I wol be to yow bothe 1240
 This is to seyn / ye bothe fair and good
 I pray to god / that I mote steruen wood
 But I to yow / be al so good and trewe
 As euere was wyf/ syn þat the world was newe 1244

And but I be to morn / as fair to sene
 Ay any lady / Emperice / or Queene
 That is bitwix the Est^t and eek the West^t
 Do with my lyf/ and deth / right as yow lest^t 1248
 Cast vp the Curtyn / looke how þat it is
 And whan the knyght^t say verrailly al this
 That she so fair was / and so yong ther-to
 ffor ioye he hente hire / in his armes two 1252
 His herte bathed / in a bath of blisse [leaf 73, back]
 A thousand tyme a rewe / he gan hir kisse
 And she obeyed hym / in euery thyng^t
 That myghte do hym plesance / or likyng^t 1256
 And thus they lyue / vn-to hir lyues ende
 In parfit ioye / and Ihesu crist vs sende
 Housbondes meke / yonge / and fressh a bedde
 And grace / touerbyde hem that we wedde 1260
 And eek/ I praye Ihesu shorte hir lyues
 That noght wol be gouerned / by hir wyues
 And olde / and angry nygardes of dispence
 God sende hem soone / verray pestilence 1264

¶ Here endeth the Wyues tale of Bathe

¶ The prologe of the ffreres tale [on leaf 73, back]

This worthy lymytour / this noble frere
 He made al wey / a manere louryng cheere
 Vp on the Somnour / but for honestee
 No vileyns word / as yet to hym spak he 1268
 But atte laste / he seyde vn-to the wyf
 Dame quod he / god yeue yow right good lyf
 Ye han heer touched / al so mote I thee
 In scole matere / greet difficultee 1272
 Ye han seyde muche thyng^t right wel I seye
 But dame / here as we ryden by the weye
 Vs nedeth nat^t to speken / but of game
 And lete Auctoritees / on goddes name 1276
 To prechyng^t and to scole of clergie
 But^t if it like / to this compaignye
 I wol yow / of a Somnour telle a game
 Pardee / ye may wel knowe by the name 1280
 That of a Somnour / may no good be sayd
 I praye / that noon of yow / be ypayd
 A somnour / is a rennere vp and doun
 With mandementz / for fornicacioun 1284
 And is ybet^t at euery townes ende
 ¶ Oure hoost tho spak / a sire / ye sholde be hende
 And curteys / as a man of youre estaat^t [leaf 74]
 In compaignye / we wol no debaat^t 1288
 Telleth youre tale / and lat the Somnour be
 ¶ Nay quod the Somnour / lat hym seye to me
 What so hym list^t whan it comth to my lot^t
 By god / I shal hym quyten euery grot^t 1292
 I shal hym telle / which a gret honour
 It is / to be a flaterynge lymytour
 And of / many another manere cryme
 Which nedeth nat rehercen / for this tyme 1296
 And his office / I schal hym telle ywys
 ¶ Oure hoost answerde / pees namoore of this
 And after this / he seyde vn-to the frere
 Tel forth youre tale / leeu maister deere 1300
 Here endeth the prologe of the ffrere

and bigynneth his tale

W

Hilom / ther was dwellynge in my contree
An Erchedekne / a man of hy degree

That boldely / dide execucioñ

In punysshynge of ffornicacioñ 1304

Of wicchecraft and eek of Bawderye

Of diffamacioñ / and auoutrye

Of chirche Reues / and of testamentz

Of contractes / and eek of lakke of sacramentz 1308

Of vsure / and of Symonye also

But certes / lecchours / dide he grettest wo

They sholde synge²n if that they were hent^t [² From here to the
end of this line is in
a later 15th-century
hand in the MS.]

And smale tyth²eres were foule yschent^t

If any person /² wold vp-on hem pleyne

Ther myghte² asterte hym no pecunial peyne

ffor smale² tithes & for smal offryng^t

He made the² peple ful pitusly to syng^t 1316

ffor er the² bysschop caght hem with hys hooc

They were² in the erchdeknys book /

And thanne² had he thurgh hys Iurisdiccioñ

Power / to² do on hem correccion 1320

He hadde a Somnour / redy to his hond [leaf 74, back]

A slyer boy / nas noon in Engelond

ffor subtilly / he hadde his espaille

That taughte hym / wher hym myghte auaille 1324

He koude spare / of lecchours / oon or two

To techen hym / to foure and twenty mo

ffor theigh this Somnour / wood were as an hare

To telle his harlotrye / I wol nat spare 1328

ffor we been / out of his correccioñ
 They han of vs / no Iurisdiccioñ
 Ne neuere shullen / terme of hir lyues
 ¶ Peter / so been the wommen of the styves 1332
 Quod this Somnour / yput out of my cure
 ¶ Pees with myschaunce / and with mysauenture
 Thus seyde oure hoost / and lat hym telle his tale
 Now telleth forth / thogh þat the Somnour gale 1336
 Ne spareth nat myn owene mayster deere
 ¶ This false theef this Somnour / quod the frere
 Hadde alwey / baudes redy to his hond
 As any hauk to lure in Engelond 1340
 That tolde hym / al the secree þat they knewe
 ffor hire aqueyntance / was nat come of newe
 They weren / hise Approwours pryuely
 He took hym self / a greet profit ther by 1344
 His maister knew nat alwey / what he wan
 With-uten mandement a lewed man
 He koude somne / on peyne of cristes curs
 And they were glade / for to fille his purs 1348
 And make hym / grete festes atte nale
 And right as Iudas / hadde purses smale
 And was a theef / right swich a theef was he
 His maister / hadde but half his duetee 1352
 He was / if I shal yeuen hym his laude
 A theef / and eek a somnour / and a baude
 He hadde eek wenches / at his retenue
 That wheither þat sir Robert / or sire hewe 1356
 Or Iakke / or Rauf or who so that it were
 That lay by hem / they tolde it in his ere
 Thus was the wenche and he / of oon assent
 And he wolde fecche / a feyned mandement 1360
 And somne hem to Chapitre / bothe two [leaf 75]
 And pile the man / and lete the wenche go
 ¶ Thanne wolde he seye / freend I shal for thy sake
 Do stryke hire / out of oure lettres blake 1364

Thee thar namore / as in this cas *trauaille*
 I am thy freend / ther I thee may auaille
 Certeyn / he knew of bryberyes mo
 Than possible is / to telle in yeres two 1368
 ffor in this world / nys dogge for the bowe
 That kan an hurt deer / from an hool knowe
 Bet than this *Somnour* / knewe a sly lecchour
 Or an Auouter / or a *paramour* 1372
 And for that was / the fruyt of al his rente
 Ther-fore on it he sette al his entente
 ¶ And so bifel / that ones on a day
 This *Somnour* / euere waityng on his pray 1376
 ffor to somne an old wydewe / a Ribibe
 ffeynyng a cause / for he wolde brybe
 Happed / that he say / bifore hym ryde
 A gay yeman / vnder a fforest syde 1380
 A bowe he bar / and arwes brighte & kene
 He hadde vp-on / a courtepy of grene
 An hat vp-on his heed / with frenges blake
 ¶ Sire quod this *Somnour* / hayl / and wel atake 1384
 ¶ Wel come quod he / and euery good felawe
 Where ridestow / vnder this grene shawe
 Seyde this yeman / wiltow fer to day
 ¶ This *Somnour* hym answerde / and seyde nay 1388
 Here faste by quod he / is myn entente
 To ryden / for to reysen vp a rente
 That longeth / to my lordes duetee
 ¶ Artow thanne a Bailly? / ye quod he 1392
 He dorste nat for verray filthe and shame
 Seye þat he was a *Somnour* / for the name
 ¶ *Depardieux* quod this yeman / deere brother
 Thow art a bailly / and I am another 1396
 I am vnknownen / as in this contree
 Of thyn aqueyntance / I wolde praye thee
 And eek of bretherhede / if þat yow leste
 I haue gold / and siluer / in my cheste 1400

If that thee happed to come in oure shire [leaf 75, back]
 Al shal be thyn / right as thow wolt desire
 ¶ Graunt mercy quod this Somnour / by my feith
 Euerich in ootheres hond / his trouthe leyth 1404
 ffor to be sworn bretheren / til they deye
 In daliaunce / they ryden forth and pleye
 ¶ This Somnour / which þat was / as ful of Iangles
 As ful of venym / been thise waryangles 1408
 And euere enqueryng^t vp-on euery thyng^t
 Brother quod he / where is now youre dwellyng^t
 Another day / if þat I sholde yow seche
 This yeman hym answerde / in softe speche 1412
 ¶ Brother quod he / fer in the North contree
 Where as I hope / som tyme I shal thee see
 Er we departe / I shal thee so wel wisse
 That of myn hous / ne shaltow neuere mysse 1416
 ¶ Now brother quod this Somnour I yow preye
 Teche me / whil þat we ryden by the weye
 Syn þat ye been a Baillyf / as am I
 Som subtiltee / and tel me feithfully 1420
 In myn office / how I may moost wynne
 And spareth nat^t for conscience ne synne
 But as my brother / tel me how do ye
 ¶ Now by my trouthe / brother deere / seyde he 1424
 As I shal tellen thee / a feithful tale
 My wages been / ful streyte / and ful smale
 My lord is hard to me / and daungerous
 And myn office / is ful laborous 1428
 And therefore / by extorcions I lyue
 ffor sothe I take / al that men wol me yeue
 Algate / by sleighte / or by violence
 ffro yeer to yeer / I wynne al my dispence 1432
 I kan no bettre tellen / feithfully
 ¶ Now certes quod this Somnour / so fare I
 I spare nat to taken / god it woot^t
 But it be to heuy / or to hoot^t 1436

What I may gete / in conseil priuely
 No manere conscience / of that haue I
 Nere myn extorcioñ / I myghte nat lyuen
 Ne of swiche Iapes / wol I nat be shryuen 1440
 Stomak' ne Conscience / ne knowe I noon [leaf 76]
 I sherewe / thise Shryftes-fadres euerychon
 Wel be we met' by god / and by Seint Iame
 But leue brother / tel me thanne thy name 1444
 Quod this Somnour / in this mene whyle
 This yeman / gan a litel for to smyle
 ¶ Brother quod he / woltow þat I thee telle
 I am a feend / my dwellyng' is in helle 1448
 And here I ryde / aboute my purchasyng'
 To wite / wher men wol yeue me any thyng'
 My purchas / is theeffect of al my rente
 Looke how thow rydest' for the same entente 1452
 To wynne good / thow rekkest neuere how
 Right so fare I / for ryde wold I now
 Vn-to the worldes ende / for a preye
 ¶ A quod this Somnour / benedicite what sey ye 1456
 I wende / ye were a yeman trewely
 Ye han a mannes shape / as wel as I
 Han ye a figure thanne / determynat
 In helle ther ye been / in youre estat 1460
 ¶ Nay certeynly quod he / ther haue we noon
 But whan vs liketh / we kan take vs oon
 Or ellis make yow seme / we ben shape
 Som tyme / lyk a man / or lyk an Ape 1464
 Or lyk an Aungel / kan I ryde or go
 It is no wonder thyng' theigh it be so
 A lousy Iogelour / kan deceyue thee
 And pardee yet kan I / moore craft than he 1468
 ¶ Whi quod this Somnour / ryde ye thanne or goon
 In sondry shape / and nat alwey in oon
 ¶ ffor we quod he / wol vs swiche formes make
 As moost able is / oure preyes for to take 1472

¶ What maketh yow / to han al this labour
 ¶ fful many a cause / leue sire Somnour
 Seyde this feend / but alle thyng hath tyme
 The day is short / and it is passed pryme 1476
 And yet ne wan I no thyng in this day
 I wol entende / to wynnyng / if I may
 And nat entende / oure wittes to declare
 ffor brother myn / thy wit is al to bare 1480
 To vnderstonde / al-thogh I tolde hem thee [leaf 76, back]
 But for thow axest why labouren we
 ffor som tyme / we been goddes Instrumentz
 And meenes / to doon his comandementz 1484
 Whan that hym list / vp on his creatures
 In diuers art and in diuerse figures
 With-outen hym / we han no myght certayn
 If that hym lyst to stonde ther agayn 1488
 And som tyme / at oure preyere / han we leue
 Oonly the body / and nat the soule greue
 Witnesse on Iob / whom þat we diden wo
 And som tyme / han we myght of bothe two 1492
 This is to seyn / of soule and body eke
 And som tyme / be we suffred for to seke
 Vp-on a man / and do his soule vnreste
 And nat his body / and al is for the beste 1496
 Whan he with-standeth / oure temptaciō
 It is / a cause / of his sauaciō
 Al be it that it was / nat oure entente
 He sholde be sauf but þat we wolde hym hente. 1500
 And som tyme / be we seruant vn-to man
 As to the Erchebisshope / Seint Dunstan
 And to the Apostles / seruant eek was I
 ¶ Yet tel me / quod the Somnour feithfully 1504
 Make ye yow newe bodyes / thus alway
 Of Elementz s / the feend answerde nay
 Som tyme we feyne / and som tyme we aryse
 With dede bodyes / in ful sondry wyse 1508

And speke as renably / and faire and wel
 As to the Phitonissa / dide Samuel
 And yet wol som men seye / it was nat he
 I do no fors / of youre dyuynytee 1512
 But o thyng warne I thee / I wol nat Iape
 Thow wolt algates wite / how we be shape
 Thow shalt her afterwardes / my brother deere
 Come there / thee nedeth nat of me to lere 1516
 ffor thow shalt by thyn owene experience
 Konne in a chayer / rede of this sentence
 Bet than Virgile / whil he was on lyue
 Or Dant also / now lat vs ryde blyue 1520
 ffor I wol holde / compaignye with thee [leaf 77]
 Til it be so / that thow forsake me
 ¶ Nay quod this Somnour / that shal nat bityde
 I am a yeman / knowen is ful wyde 1524
 My trouthe wol I holde / as in this cas
 ffor theigh thow were / the deuel Sathanas
 My trouthe wol I holde / to thee my brother
 As I am sworn / and ech of vs til oother 1528
 ffor to be trewe brother / in this cas
 And bothe we goon / abouten oure purchas
 Taak thow thy part what þat men wol thee yeue
 And I shal myn / thus may we bothe lyue 1532
 And if that any of vs / haue moore than oother
 Lat hym be trewe / and parte it with his brother
 ¶ I graunte quod the deuel / by my fey
 And with that word / they ryden forth hir wey 1536
 And right at the entryng of the townes ende
 To which this Somnour / shoop hym for to wende
 They saye a Cart that charged was with hey
 Which that a Cartere / droof forth in his wey 1540
 Deep was the wey / for which the Carte stood
 This Cartere smoot and cryde as he were wood
 Hayt Brok hayt Scot what spare ye for the stones
 The feend quod he / yow fecche body and bones 1544

As ferforthly / as euere were ye foled
 So muchel wo / as I haue with yow tholed
 The deuel haue al / bothe hors / and Cart and hey
 ¶ This Somnour seyde / heer shul we han a pley 1548
 And neer the feend he drogh / as noght we were
 fful pryuely / and rowned in his ere
 Herkne my brother / herkne by thy feith
 Herestow nat how þat the Cartere seith 1552
 Hent it anon / for he hath yeue it thee
 Bothe hey / and Cart and eek his caples thre
 ¶ Nay quod the deuel / god woot neuer a del
 It is nat his entente / trust thow me wel 1556
 Axe hym thy self / if thow nat trowest me
 Or ellys stynt a while / and thow shalt se
 ¶ This Cartere / taketh his hors vp-on the croupe
 And they bigonne / drawen and to stoupe 1560
 Heyt now quod he / ther Ihesu crist yow blesse [leaf 77, back]
 And al his handes werk bothe moore and lesse
 That was wel twight myn owene lyard boy
 I pray god saue thee / and Seint loy 1564
 Now is my Cart out of the slow pardee
 ¶ Lo brother quod the feend / what tolde I thee
 Heere may ye se / myn owene deere brother
 The Carl spak o thyng but he thoghte another 1568
 Lat vs go forth / abouten oure viage
 Heere wynne I no thyng vp-on cariage
 ¶ Whan that they comen / som what out of towne
 This Somnour / to his brother gan to rowne 1572
 Brother quod he / here woneth an old rebekke
 That hadde al-moost as leef to lese hir nekke
 As for to yeue a peny / of hir good
 I wol han .xij. pens / thogh that she be wood 1576
 Or I wol somne hire / vn-to oure office
 And yet god woot of hire knowe I no vice
 But for thow canst nat as in this contree
 Wynne thy cost taak heer ensample of me 1580

This Somnour / clappeth at the wydwes gate
 Com out quod he / thow olde viritate
 I trowe thow hast som frere / or preest with thee
 ¶ Who clappeth seyde this wyf / benedicitee 1584
 God saue yow sire / what is youre swete wille
 ¶ I haue quod he / of somonce a bille
 Vp peyne of cursyng' looke that thow be
 To morn / bifore the Erchedeknes knee 1588
 Tanswere to the court' of certeyn thynges
 ¶ Now lord quod she / crist Ihesu kyng of kynges
 So wisly helpe me / as I ne may
 I haue been syk' and that ful many a day 1592
 I may nat go so fer quod she / ne ryde
 But I be deed / so priketh it in my syde
 May I nat axe a libel / sire Somnour
 And answe're there / by my procutour 1596
 To swiche thyng' as men wole opposen me
 ¶ Yis quod this Somnour / pay anon lat see
 Twelf pens to me / and I wol thee acquyte
 I shal no profyt han ther by / but lyte 1600
 My Maister hath the profit / and nat I [leaf 78]
 Com of / and lat me ryden hastily
 Yif me .xij. pens / I may no lenger tarye
 ¶ Twelf pens quod she / now lady Seinte Marie 1604
 So wisly help me god / out of care and synne
 This wyde world / thogh that I sholde wynne
 Ne haue I nat .xij. pens / with-Inne myn hoold
 Ye knowen wel / that I am poure and oold 1608
 Kythe youre almesse / on me poure wrecche
 ¶ Nay thanne quod he / the foule feend me fecche
 If I thexcuse / theigh thow shul be spilt'
 ¶ Allas quod she / god woot I haue no gilt' 1612
 ¶ Pay me quod he / or by the swete Seinte Anne
 As I wol bere away / thy newe panne
 ffor dette / which thow owest me of oold
 Whan þat thow madest / thyn housbonde cokewold 1616

I payde at hom / for thy correccioñ
 ¶ Thow lyxt quod she / by my sauacioñ
 Ne was I neuere er now / wydwe ne wyf
 Somoned vn-to youre court in al my lyf / 1620
 Ne neuere I nas / but of my body trewe
 Vn-to the deuel / blak and row of hewe
 Yeue I thy body / and my panne also
 ¶ And whan the deuel / herde hire cursen so 1624
 Vp-on hir knees / he seyde in this manere
 Now Mabely / myn owene moder deere
 Is this youre wyl in earnest / þat ye seye
 ¶ The deuel quod she / so fecche hym er he deye 1628
 And panne and al / but he wol hym repente
 ¶ Nay olde stot that is nat myn entente
 Quod this Somnour / for to repente me
 ffor any thyng that I haue had of thee 1632
 I wolde I hadde thy smok / and euery clooth
 ¶ Now brother quod the deuel / be noght wrooth
 Thy body and this panne / been myne by right
 Thow shalt with me to helle / yet to nyght 1636
 Wher thow shalt knowen / of oure pryuetee
 Moore / than a maister of dyuynytee
 And with that word / this foule feend hym hente
 Body and soule / he with the deuel wente 1640
 Wher as that Somnours / han hir heritage [leaf 78, back]
 And god / that made after his ymage
 Mankynde / saue / and gyde vs alle and some
 And leue thise Somnours / goode men to bcome 1644
 ¶ Lordynges I koude han told yow / quod the frere
 Hadde I had leyser / for this Somnour heere
 After the text / of crist Poul and Ioñ
 And of oure othere doctours / many oon 1648
 Swich peynes / that youre hertes myghte agryse
 Al be it so / no tonge may it deuyse
 Thogh that I myghte / a thousand wynter telle
 The peynes / of thilke cursed hous of helle 1652

But for to kepe vs / fro that cursed place
 Waketh / and preyeth Ihesu for his grace
 So kepe vs / fro the temptour Sathanas
 Herketh this word / beth war as in this cas 1656
 The leon^d sit^t in his awayt alway
 To sle the Innocent^t if that he may
 Disposeth ay youre hertes / to withstonde
 The feend / that yow wolde maken thral and bonde 1660
 He may nat tempte yow / ouer youre myght^t
 ffor crist^t wol be youre champion and knyght^t
 And prayeth / that this Somnours hem repente
 Of hir mysdedes / er that the feend hem hente 1664

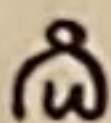
¶ Here endeth / the freres tale

¶ The Prologe / of the Somnours tale 𐀚 [on lf 78, bk]

This Somnour in his Stiropes / hye he stood
 Vp-on this frere / his herte was so wood
 That lyk an Aspen lief / he quook for Ire
 ¶ Lordynges quod he / but o thyng I desire 1668
 I yow biseke / that of youre curteisye
 Syn ye han herd / this false frere lye
 As suffreth me / I may my tale telle
 This frere bosteth / that he knoweth helle 1672
 And god it woot that it is litel wonder
 ffreres and feendes / been but lyte a sonder
 ffor pardee / ye han ofte tyme herd telle [leaf 79]
 How that a frere / rauysshed was to helle 1676
 In Spirit ones / by avisioun
 And as an Aungel / ladde hym vp and down
 To shewen hym / the peynes þat ther were
 In al the place / say he nat a frere 1680
 Of oother folk / he say ynowe in wo
 Vn-to this Angel / spak the frere tho
 ¶ Now Sire quod he / han freres swich a grace
 That noon of hem / shal come to this place 1684
 ¶ Yis quod this Aungel / many a Milioun
 And vn-to Sathanas / he ladde hym down
 And now hath Sathanas / seith he a tayl
 Brodder / than of a Carryk is the sayl 1688
 Hold vp thy tayl / thow Sathanas quod he
 Shewe forth thyn ers / and lat the frere se
 Where is thee nest of freres / in this place
 And er þat / half a furlong wey of space 1692

Right so as bees / out swarmen from an hyue
 Out of the deueles ers / ther gonne dryue
 Twenty thousand freres / on a route
 And thurgh-out helle / swarmeden aboute 1696
 And comen again / as faste as they may gon
 And in his ers / they crepten euerychon
 He clapte his tayl agayn / and lay ful stille
 This frere / whan he looked hadde his fille 1700
 Vp-on the tormentz / of this sory place
 His spirit^t god restored of his grace
 Vn-to his body agayn / and he awook^t
 But nathelees / for fere yet he quook^t 1704
 So was the deueles ers / ay in his mynde
 That is his heritage / of verray kynde
 God saue yow alle / saue this cursed frere
 My prologe / wol I ende / in this manere 1708

¶ Here endeth the prologe of the Somnours tale 𐄂

¶ Here bygynneth the Somnours tale  [leaf 79, back]

LOrdynge / ther is in Yorkshire / as I gesse
 A Merssh contree / called Holdernesse
 In which / ther wente a lymytour aboute
 To preche / and eek to begge / it is no doubte 1712
 And so bifel / that on a day this frere
 Hadde preched at a chirche / in his manere
 And specially / abouen euery thyng
 Excyted he the peple / in his prechyng 1716
 To trentals / and to yeue for goddes sake
 Wher-with men myghte / holy houses make
 Ther as dyuyne seruice / is honoured
 Nat ther / as it is wasted and deuoured 1720
 Ne ther / it nedeth nat to be yeue
 As to possessioners / that mowen lyue
 Thanked be god / in wele and habundance
 Trentals seyde he / deliuereth from penaunce 1724
 Hir freendes soules / as wel olde as yonge
 Ye / whan that they / been hastily ysonge
 Nat for to holde a preest Ioly and gay
 He syngeth nat but o masse in a day 1728
 Deliuereth out quod he / anon the soules
 fful hard it is / with flessch-hook / or with oules
 To been y-clawed / or to brenne / or bake
 Now spede yow hastily / for cristes sake 1732
 And whan this frere / hadde seyde al his entente
 With qui cum patre / forth his wey he wente
 Whan folk in chirche / hadde yeue hym / what hem leste
 He wente his wey / no lenger wolde he reste 1736

With scryppe and typped staf / y-tukked hye
 In euery hous / he gan to poure and pry
 And beggeth Mele / and chese / or ellis corn
 His felawe hadde a staf / typped with horn 1740
 A peyre of tables / al of yuory
 And a poyntel / polysshed fetisly
 And wroot the names / alwey as he stood
 Of alle folk / that yaf hem any good 1744
 Ascaunces / that he wolde for hem preye [leaf 80]
 Yif vs a busschel whete / Malt' or Reye
 A goddes kechyl / or a trype of cheese
 Or ellis what yow lyst' we may nat chese 1748
 A goddes half peny / or a masse peny
 Or yif vs of youre brawn / if ye haue eny
 A dagon of youre Blanket' leeue dame
 Oure suster deere / lo heere I write youre name 1752
 Bacon / or boef / or swich thyng as ye fynde
 A sturdy harlot' wente ay hem bihynde
 That was hir hostes man / and baar a sakt'
 And what men yaf hem / leyde it on his bak' 1756
 And whan *that* he was out at dore anon
 He planed away / the names euerichon
 That he biforn / hadde writen in his tables
 He serued hem / with nyfles and *with* fables 1760
 ¶ Nay ther thow lixt' thow Somnour quod the frere
 ¶ Pees quod oure hoost' for cristes moder deere
 Tel forth thy tale / and spare it nat at al
 ¶ So thryue I quod this Somnour / so I shal 1764
 So longe he wente / hous by hous / til he
 Cam til an hous / ther he was wont to be
 Refreshed moore / than in an hundred placis
 Syk lay the goode man / whos the place is 1768
 Bedrede vp-on a couche / lowe he lay
 Deus hic quod he / O Thomas freend good day
 Seyde this frere / curteisly and softe
 Thomas quod he / god yelde yow ful ofte 1772

Haue I vp-on this bench / faren ful wel
 Heere haue I eten / many a murye mel
 And fro the bench / he droof away the cat
 And leyde adoun / his potente and his hat 1776
 And eek his scrippe / and sette hym softe adown
 His felawe / was go walked in to town
 fforth with his knaue / in-to that hostelrye
 Wher as he shoope hym / thilke nyght to lye 1780
 ¶ O deere maister / quod this syke man
 How han ye fare / sith that March bigan
 I say yow noght this fourtynyght or moore
 ¶ God woot quod he / laboured I haue ful soore 1784
 And specially / for thy sauacioñ [leaf 80, back]
 Haue I seyð / many a precious orisoñ
 And for oure othere freendes / god hem blesse
 I haue to day / been at youre chirche at messe [at messe is in a later hand]
 And seyð a sermon / after my symple wit
 Nat al / after the text of holy writ
 ffor it is hard to yow / as I suppose
 And therfore / wol I teche yow al the glose 1792
 Glosyng is a glorious thyng certeyn
 ffor lettre sleeth / so as we clerkes seyn
 Ther haue I taught hem / to be charitable
 And spende hir good / ther it is resonable 1796
 And ther I say oure dame / a where is she
 ¶ Yond in the yerd / I trowe þat she be
 Seyde this man / and she wol come anon
 ¶ Ey maister / wel come be ye / by Seint Ioñ 1800
 Seyde this wyf / how fare ye hertely
 ¶ The frere ariseth vp / ful curteisly
 And hire embraceth / in hise armes narwe
 And kiste hir swete / and chirteth as a Sparwe 1804
 With his lippes / Dame quod he / right wel
 As he / that is youre servant euery del
 Thanked be god / that yow yaf soule and lyf
 Yet say I nat this day / so fair a wyf 1808

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H H
 H H H
 H H H H
 H H H H

In al the chirche / god so saue me
 ¶ Ye god amende defautes / sire quod she
 Algates / wel come be ye / by my fey
 ¶ Graunt mercy dame / this haue I founde alwey 1812
 But of youre grete goodnesse / by youre leue
 I wolde pray yow / that ye nat yow greue
 I wol with Thomas / speke a litel throwe
 Thise Curatz / been ful necligent and slowe 1816
 To grope tendrely / a conscience
 In shrift in prechyng is my diligence
 And studie / in Petres wordes / and in Poules
 I walke / and fisshe / cristen mennes soules 1820
 To yelden Ihesu crist. his propre rente
 To sprede his word / is set al myn entente
 ¶ Now by youre leue / o deere sire quod she
 Chideth hym wel / for Seinte Trinitee 1824
 He is as angry / as a Pissemyre [leaf 81]
 Thogh that he haue / al that he kan desire
 Thogh I hym wrye a nyght and make hym warm
 And on hym leye / my leg outhur myn arm 1828
 He groneth lyk oure boor / lyth in oure Sty
 Oother disport right noon of hym haue I
 I may nat please hym / in no maner cas
 ¶ O Thomas Ie vous dy / Thomas / Thomas 1832
 This maketh the feend / this moste been amended
 Ire is a thyng that hye god defended
 And ther-of / wol I speke / a word / or two
 ¶ Now maister quod the wyf / er þat I go 1836
 What wol ye dyne / I wol go ther aboute
 ¶ Now dame quod he / now Ie vous dy sanz doute
 Haue I nat of a Capon / but the lyuere
 And of youre softe breed / nat but a shyuere 1840
 And after that a rosted pigges heed
 But þat I nolde / no beest for me were deed
 Thanne hadde I with yow / homly suffisaunce
 I am a man / of litel sustenaunce 1844

My Spirit^t hath his fostryng^t in the bible
 The body is ay / so redy and penyble
 To wake / that my stomak^t is destroyed
 I pray yow dame / ye be nat anoyed 1848
 Thogh I so freendly / yow my conseil shewe
 By god / I wolde nat telle it^t but a fewe
 ¶ Now sire quod she / but o word / er I go
 My child is deed / with-Inne thise wykes two 1852
 Soone after that ye wente / out of this town
 ¶ His deeth say I / by reuelacioun
 Seith this frere / at hom in oure dortour
 I dar wel seyn / that er þat half an hour 1856
 After his deeth / I say hym born to blisse
 In myn avision / so god me wisse
 So dide oure Sexteyn / and oure ffermerer
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer 1860
 They may now / god be thanked / of his lone
 Maken hir Iubilee / and walke allone
 And vp I roos / and al oure Couent eke
 With many a teere / triklyng on my cheke 1864
 With-uten noyse / or clateryng of belles [leaf 81, back]
 Te Deum was oure song^t and no thyng elles
 Saue that to crist / I seyde an orison
 Thankynge hym / of his reuelacion 1868
 ffor sire and dame / trusteth me right wel
 Oure orisons / been wel moore effectuel
 And moore we seen / of cristes secree thynges
 Than bureH folk^t al thogh þat they were kynges 1872
 We lyue in pouerte / and in abstinence
 And bureH folk^t in richesse and dispence
 Of mete and drynke / and in hir foul delit^t
 We han this worldes lust^t al in despit 1876
 Lazar and Diues / lyueden diuersly
 And diuerse gerdon / hadde they ther-by
 Who so wol praye / he moot faste and be clene
 And fatte his soule / and make his body lene 1880

We fare as seith thapostle / clooth and foode
 Suffiseth vs / thogh they be nat ful goode
 The clenness / and the fastyng^t of vs freres
 Maketh / that crist accepteth oure prayeres 1884
 ¶ Lo Moyses / fourty dayes / and fourty nyght^t
 ffasted / er that the heighe god of myght^t
 Spak with hym / in the mountayne of Synay
 With empty wombe / fastynge many a day 1888
 Receyued he the lawe / that was writen
 With goddes fynger / and Elye wel ye witen
 In Mount Oreb / er he hadde any speche
 With hye god / that is oure lyues leche 1892
 He fasted longe / and was in contemplaunce
 Aaron / that hadde the temple in gouernaunce
 And eek / that othere preestes euerichon
 In-to the temple / whan they sholde gon 1896
 To preye for the peple / and do seruyse
 They nolden drynken / in no maner wyse
 No drynke / which that myghte hem dronke make
 But there in abstinence / preye and wake 1900
 Lest that they deyden / tak hede what I seye
 But they be sobre / that for the peple preye
 War that I seye namoore / for it suffiseth
 Oure lord Ihesu / as holy writ deuyseth 1904
 Yaf vs ensample / of fastyng / and prayeres [leaf 82]
 Ther fore / we mendynantz / we sely freres
 Been wedded / to pouerte and continence
 To charitee / humblesse and abstinence 1908
 To persecucion / for rightwisnesse
 To wepyng^t misericorde and clenness
 And ther-fore may ye se / that oure prayeres
 I speke of vs / we mendinantz / we freres 1912
 Be to the hye god / moore acceptable
 Than youres / with youre festes at the table
 ffro Paradys first^t if I shal nat lye
 Was man out chaced / for his glotonye 1916

And chaast was man / in Paradys certeyn
 ¶ But herkne Thomas / what I shal seyn
 I ne haue no text^t of it^t as I suppose
 But I shal fynde it^t in a maner glose 1920
 That specially / oure swete lord Ihesus
 Spak this by freres / whan he seyde thus
 Blessed be they / that poure in Spirit been
 And so forth / in the gospel / may ye seen 1924
 Wher it be likker / oure profession
 Or hire / that swymmen in possession
 ffy on hir pompe / and hir glotonye
 And for hir lewednesse / I hem diffye 1928
 Me thynketh / they been lyk Iouynyan
 ffat as a whale / and walkyng as a swan
 Al vynolent^t as Botel in the Spence
 Hir preyere is / of ful greet reuerence 1932
 Whan they for soules / seye the psalm of Dauit
 Lo buf they seye / cor meum eructauit^t
 Who folweth cristes gospel / and his foore
 But we that humble been / and chaast/ and poore 1936
 Werkers of goddes word / nat Auditours
 Ther fore / right as an hauk / vp at a sours
 Vp spryngeth in-to theyr / right so prayeres
 Of charitable / and chaste bisy freres 1940
 Maken hir sours / to goddes eryl^s two
 Thomas / Thomas / so mote I ryde or go
 And by that lord / that clepid is Seint yue
 Nere thow oure brother / sholdestow nat thryue 1944
 [In¹] oure chapitre / praye we day and nyght^t [leaf 82, back]
 To crist^t that he thee sende / heele and myght^t [1 Rats]
 Thy body / for to welden hastily
 ¶ God woot quod he / no thyng ther-of feele I 1948
 As help me crist^t as I in fewe yeres
 Haue spended / vp-on diuerse manere freres
 fful many a pound / yet fare I neuere the bet
 Certeyn / my good haue I almoost biset^t 1952

ffarwel my gold / for it is al ago
 ¶ The frere answerde / o Thomas doostow so
 What nedeth yow / diuerse freres seche
 What nedeth hym / that hath a *parfit* leche 1956
 To sechen / othere leches in the town
 Youre inconstance / is youre confusioun
 Holde ye thanne me / or ellis oure Couent
 To preye for yow / been insufficient 1960
 Thomas / that Iape / nys nat worth a myte
 Youre maladye / is for we han to lyte
 A yif that Couent/ half a quarter otes
 A yif that Couent .xxiiij. grotes 1964
 A yif that frere a peny / and lat hym go
 Nay nay Thomas / it may no thyng be so
 What is a ferthyng worth / parted in twelue
 Lo / ech thyng/ that is oned in hym selue 1968
 Is moore strong^t than whan it is to-scatered
 Thomas / of me / thow shalt nat been yflatered
 Thow woldest han oure labour / al for noght^t
 The hye god / that al this world hath wrought 1972
 Seith / that the werkman / worthy is his hire
 Thomas / noght of youre tresor I desire
 As for my self / but that al oure Couent
 To praye for yow / is ay so diligent 1976
 And for to buylden / cristes owene chirche
 Thomas / if ye wol lerne for to wirche
 Of buyldyng vp of churches / may ye fynde
 If it be good / in Thomas lyf of Inde 1980
 Ye lye heere ful of Anger and of Ire
 With which / the deuel set youre herte afire
 And chiden heere / the sely Innocent/
 Youre wyf/ that is so meke and pacient 1984
 And ther-fore Thomas / trowe me if thee leste [leaf 83]
 Ne stryue nat with thy wyf/ as for thy beste
 And bere this word away / now by thy feith
 Touchynge swich thyng^t lo what the wise man seith 1988

¶ With-Inne thyn hous / ne be thow no leon
 To thy subgitz / do noon oppressioñ
 Ne make thyne aqueyntances / nat for to flee
 And Thomas / yet eft soones I charge thee 1992
 Be war from hire / that in thy bosom slepeth
 War fro the serpent that so sleighly crepeth
 Vnder the gras / and styngeth subtilly
 Be war my sone / and herkne paciently 1996
 That twenty thousand men / han lost hir lyues
 ffor stryuyng with hir lemmans and hir wyues
 Now sith ye han / so holy meke a wyf
 What nedeth yow Thomas / to maken stryf/ 2000
 Their nys ywis / no serpent so cruel
 Whan man tret on his tayl / ne half so fel
 As womman is / whan she hath caught an Ire
 Vengeance is thanne / al that they desire 2004
 Ire is a synne / oon of the grete of seuene
 Abhomynable / vn-to the god of heuene
 And to hym self / it is destruccioñ
 This euery lewed viker / or parsoñ 2008
 Kan seye / how Ire engendreth homicide
 Ire is in sooth / executour of pryde
 I koude of Ire / seye so muche sorwe
 My tale / sholde laste til to morwe 2012
 And ther-fore praye I god / bothe day and nyght
 An Irous man / god sende hym litel myght
 It is greet harm / and certes greet pitee
 To sette an Irous man in heigh degree 2016
WHilom / ther was an Irous potestat
 As seith Senek that durynge his estat
 Vp-on a day / out ryden knyghtes two
 And as ffortune wolde / that it were so 2020
 That oon of hem cam hom / that oother noght
 Anon the knyght before the Iuge is broght
 That seyde thus / thow hast thy felawe slayn
 ffor which / I deme thee to the deeth certayn 2024

[1 An]d to another knyght^t comanded he [leaf 83, back]
 Go leed hym to the deeth / I charge thee [1 Rats]
 And happed / as they wente by the weye
 Toward the place / ther he sholde deye 2028
 The knyght cam / which men wenden had be deed
 Thanne thoghten they / it were the beste reed
 To lede hem bothe / to the Iuge agayn
 They seyden / lord / the knyght ne hath nat slayn 2032
 His felawe / heere he stant hool alyue
 ¶ Ye shul be deed quod he / so moot I thryue
 This is to seyn / bothe oon and two and thre
 And to the firste knyght^t right thus spak/ he 2036
 ¶ I dampned thee / thou most algate be deed
 And thow also / most nedes lese thyn heed
 ffor thow art cause / why thy felawe deyth
 And to the thridde knyght^t right thus he seith 2040
 Thow hast nat doon / that I comanded thee
 And thus he dide / do sleen hem alle thre
 ¶ Irous Cambyses / was eek dronkelewe
 And ay delited hym / to been a shrewe 2044
 And so bifel / a lord of his meynee
 That louede / vertuous moralitee
 Seyde on a day / bitwix hem two right thus 2047
 ¶ A lord is ²lost if^t he be vicius² [2—2 in a later hand]
 And dronkenesse / is eek a foul record
 Of any man / and namely in a lord
 Ther is ful many an eighe / and many an ere
 Awaityng on a lord / he noot nat where 2052
 ffor goddes loue / drynk moore attemprely
 Wyn maketh man / to lesen wrecchedly
 His mynde / and eek his lymes euerychon
 ¶ The reuers shaltow se / quod he anon 2056
 And preue it^t by thyn owene experience
 That wyn ne dooth to folk^t no swich offence
 Ther is no wyn / bireueth me my myght^t
 Of hond ne foot^t ne of myne eyen sight^t 2060

And for despit^t he drank ful muchel moore
 An hundred part^t than he hadde doon bifore
 And right anon / this Irous cursed wrecche
 bifore hym Leet this knyghtes sone / fecche 2064
 Comandyng hym / he sholde bifore hym stonde [leaf 84]
 And sodeynly / he took his bowe in honde
 And vp the streng^t he pulled to his ere
 And with an arwe / he slow the child right there 2068
 Now / wheither haue I / a siker hand or noon
 Quod he / is al my myght and mynde agoon
 Hath wyn byreued me / myn eye sight
 ¶ What sholde I telle / thanswere of the knyght^t 2072
 His sone was slayn / ther is namoore to seye
 Beth war ther fore / with lordes how ye pleye
 Syngeth Placebo / and I shal if I kan
 But if it be / vn-to a poure man 2076
 To a poure man / men sholde his vices telle
 But nat to a lord / thogh he sholde go to helle
 ¶ Lo Irous Syrus / thilke Percien
 How he destroyed / the ryuer of Gysen 2080
 ffor that an hors of his / was dreynt ther-Inne
 Whan that he wente / Babiloyne to wynne
 He made / that the Ryuer was so smal
 That wommen / myghte wade it ouer al 2084
 Lo what seyde he / that so wel teche kan
 Ne be no felawe / to an Irous man
 Ne with no wood man / walke by the weye
 Lest thee repente / I wol no ferther seye 2088
 ¶ Now Thomas leeue brother / lef thyn Ire
 Thow shalt me fynde / as Iust^t as is a Squyre
 Hoold nat the deueles knyf / ay at thyn herte
 Thyn angre dooth thee / al to soore smerte 2092
 But shewe to me / al thy confessioñ
 ¶ Nay quod the sike man / by Seint Symoñ
 I haue be shryuen this day / at my Curat^t
 I haue hym toold / hoolly al myn estat^t 2096

Nedeth namoore to speke of it seith he
 But if me list of myn humylitee
 ¶ Yif me thanne of thy gold / to make oure cloystre
 Quod he / for many a Muscle / and many an Oystre 2100
 Whan othere men / han been ful wel at eyse
 Hath been oure foode / oure Cloystre for to reyse
 And yet god woot vnnethe the fundement/
 Parfourned is / ne of oure pauement 2104
 [¹N]ys nat a tyle / yet with-Inne oure wones [¹Rats. leaf 84, bk]
 By god / we owen fourty pound for stones
 Now help Thomas / for hym þat harwed helle
 Or ellis mote we / oure bookes selle 2108
 And if yow lakke / oure predicacioñ
 Thanne gooth the world / al to destruccioñ
 ffor who so / fro this world / wolde vs bireue
 So god me saue / Thomas by youre leue 2112
 He wolde bireue / out of the world the sonne
 ffor who kan teche / and werchen as we konne
 And that is nat of litel tyme quod he
 But sith Elie was / or Elize 2116
 Han freres been / that fynde I of record
 In charitee / thonked be oure lord
 Now Thomas / help for Seinte charitee
 And down anon / he set hym on his knee 2120
 ¶ This sike man / weex wel neigh wood for Ire
 He wolde / that the frere / hadde been afire
 With his false dissimulacioñ
 Swich thyng/ as is in my possession 2124
 Quod he /' that may I yeue and noon oother
 Ye sey me thus / how that I am youre brother
 ¶ Ye certes quod the frere / trusteth wel
 I took oure dame / oure lettre with oure sel 2128
 ¶ Now wel quod he / and som what shal I yeue
 Vn-to youre holy Couent whil I lyue
 And in thyn hand / thow shalt it han anon
 On this condicioñ / and oother noon 2132

That thow departe it so / my deere brother
 That euery frere / haue as muche as oother
 This shaltow swere / on thy profession
 With-uten fraude / or cauelacion 2136
 ¶ I swere it quod this frere / vp-on my feith
 And ther with al / his hand in his he leith
 Lo here my feith / in me / shal be no lak
 ¶ Now thanne put thyn hand / down by my bak 2140
 Seyde this man / and grope wel bihynde
 Bynethe my buttok there shaltow fynde
 A thyng that I haue hyd in pryuetee
 ¶ A thoghte this frere / that shal go with me 2144
 And down his hand / he launcheth to the clifte [leaf 85]
 In hope / for to fynde there a yifte
 And whan this sike man / felte this frere
 Aboute his tuwel / grope there and heere 2148
 Amydde his hand / he leet the frere a fart
 Ther is no capul / drawyng in a Cart
 That myghte han late a fart of swich a sown
 ¶ The frere vp stirte / as dooth a wood leoun 2152
 A false cherl quod he / for goddes bones
 This hastow for despit doon for the nones
 Thow shalt abyge this fart if þat I may
 His meynnee / which that herden this affray 2156
 Cam lepyng In / and chaced out the frere
 And forth he gooth / with a ful angry cheere
 And fette his felawe / ther as lay his stoor
 He looked / as he were a wilde boor 2160
 He grynt with his teeth / so was he wrooth
 A sturdy paas / doun to the court he gooth
 Wher as ther woned / a man of greet honour
 To whom / that he was alwey confessour 2164
 This worthy man / was lord of that village
 This frere cam / as he were in a rage
 Where as this lord / sat etyng at his boord
 Vnnethe / myghte the frere speke a woord 2168

Til atte laste / he seyde / god yow see
 ¶ This lord gan looke / and seyde benedicitee
 What frere Iohn / what manere world is this
 I se wel / that som thyng^t ther is amys 2172
 Ye looken / as the wode were ful of theuys
 Sit down anon / and tel me what youre grief is
 And it shal been amended / if I may
 ¶ I haue quod he / had a despit to day 2176
 God yelde yow / adown in youre village
 That in this world / ther nys so poure a page
 That he nolde haue / abhomynacioun
 Of that^t I haue receyued in youre toun 2180
 And yet/ ne greueth me / no thyng so soore
 As that this olde cherl / with lokkes hoore
 Blasphemed hath / oure hooly Couent eke
 ¶ Now maister quod this lord / I yow biseke 2184
 No maister sire quod he / but seruytour [leaf 85, back]
 Thogh I haue had in scole / that honour
 God liketh nat^t that Raby men vs calle
 Neither in Market^t nyn youre large halle 2188
 ¶ No force quod he / but tel me al youre grief
 ¶ Sire quod this frere / an odious meschief
 This day bityd is / to myn ordre and me
 And so *par consequens* / to ech degree 2192
 Of holy chirche / god amende it soone
 ¶ Sire quod the lord / ye woot what is to doone
 Distempre yow noght^t ye be my confessour
 Ye been the salt of therthe / and the sauour 2196
 ffor goddes loue / youre pacience ye holde
 Tel me youre grief/ and he anon hym tolde
 As ye han herd biforn / ye woot wel what
 The lady of the hous / ay stille sat^t 2200
 Til she hadde herd / what the frere sayde
 ¶ Ey goddes moder quod she / blisful mayde
 Is ther aught ellis / tel me feithfully
 ¶ Ma dame quod he / how thynketh yow ther by 2204

¶ How þat me thynketh quod she / so god me spede
 I seye / a cherl / hath doon a cherles dede
 What sholde I seye / god lat hym neuere thee
 His sike heed / is ful of vanytee 2208
 I holde hym / in a manere frenesye
 ¶ Madame quod he / by god I shal nat lye
 But I / on oother wise / may be wreke
 I shal diffame hym / ouer al wher I speke 2212
 The false blasphemour / that charged me
 To parte / that wol nat departed be
 To euery man yliche / with meschaunce
 ¶ The lord sat stille / as he were in a traunce 2216
 And in his herte / he rolled vp and down
 How hadde this cherl / ymaginacioun
 To shewe swich a probleme / to the frere
 Neuere erst er now / herde I swich matere 2220
 I trowe the deuel / putte it in his mynde
 In Arsmetrik^t shal ther no man fynde
 Bifore this day / of swich a question
 Who sholde / make a demonstracion 2224
 That euery man sholde han / ylike his part/ [leaf 86]
 As of a soun / or sauour / of a fart^t
 O nyce prowde cherl / I shrewe his face
 ¶ Lo sires quod the lord / with harde grace 2228
 Who euere herde / of swich a thyng^t er now
 To euery man ylike / tel me how
 It is an impossible / it may nat be
 Ey nyce cherl / god lat hym neuere thee 2232
 The rumblyng of a fart^t and euery soun
 Nys but of Eyr / reuerberacioun
 And there it wasteth / lite and lite away
 Ther nys no man / kan deme by my fey 2236
 If that it were / departed equally
 What lo my cherl / lo yet how shrewedly
 Vn-to my confessour / to day he spak/
 I holde hym certeynly / demonyak^t 2240

Now ete youre mete / and lat the cherl go pleye
 Lat hym go hange hym self/ a deuel weye

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire-
 and-Carver. No break in the MS.*]

¶ Now stood / the lordes Squyer at the boord
 That carf his mete / and herde word by woord 2244
 Of alle thyng^t of which I haue yow sayd
 ¶ My lord quod he / be ye nat yuele apayd
 I koude telle / for a gowne clooth
 To yow sire frere / so ye be nat wrooth 2248
 How that this fart^t sholde euene ydeled be
 Among youre Couent^t if it liked me
 ¶ Tel quod the lord / and thow shalt haue anon
 A gowne clooth / by god and by Seint Io^hn 2252
 ¶ My lord quod he / whan that the weder is fair
 With-uten wynd / or perturbynge of Air
 Lat brynge a Cartwheel / heere in-to this halle
 But looke that it haue / his spokes alle 2256
 Twelf spokes / hath a Cartwheel comunly
 And brynge me thanne twelf freres / woot ye why
 For thrittene / is a Couent^t / as I gesse
 Youre confessour heere / for his worthynesse 2260
 Shal parfourne vp / the nombre of this Couent^t
 Thanne shal they knele adown / by oon assent^t
 And to euery spokes ende / in this manere
 ff^{ul} sadly / leye his nose / shal a frere 2264
 Youre noble Confessour / ther god hym saue [leaf 86, back]
 Shal holde his nose / vp right vnder the Naue
 Thanne shal this cherl / with baly / stif and toght^t
 As any tabour / hider been ybrought^t 2268
 And sette hym on the wheel / right of this Cart^t
 Vp on the Naue / and make hym lete a fart^t
 And ye shal seen / on peril of my lyf
 By proue / which that is demonstratyf 2272

That equally / the soun of it wol wende
 And eek the stynk/ vn-to the spokes ende
 Saue / that this worthy man / youre Confessour
 By cause / he is a man of greet honour 2276
 Shal han the firste fruyt as reson is
 The noble vsage of freres / yet is this
 The worthy men of hem / shul first be serued
 And certeynly / he hath it wel disserued 2280
 He hath to day / taught vs so muchel good
 With prechyng in the pulput ther he stood
 That I may vouche sauf / I seye for me
 He hadde the firste smel / of fartes thre 2284
 And so wolde / al his Couent hardily
 He bereth hym / so faire and holily
 ¶ The lord / the lady / ech man / saue the frere
 Seyden / that Iankyn spak in this matere 2288
 As wel / as Euclýde / or Protholomee
 Touchynge the cherl / they seyde subtiltee
 And hy wit made hym speke / as he spak
 He nys no fool / ne no demonyak 2292
 And Iankyn hath y-wonne / a newe gowne
 My tale is doon / we been almoost at towne

¶ Here endeth the Somnours tale 𐀚

[A blank leaf follows in the MS.]

¶ Here bigynneth The Prologe of the Monkes ta[le¹].
[¹ Bitten off by rats.]

WHan ended was my tale / of Melibee [leaf 88]
 And of Prudence / and hire benygnitee 3080
 Oure hoost seyde / as I am feithful man
 And by / that precious corpus Madrian
 I hadde leuere / than a barel Ale
 That goode lief my wyf / hadde herd this tale 3084
 She nys no thyng^t of swich pacience
 As was / this Melibeus wyf Prudence
 By goddes bones / whan I bete my knaues
 She bryngeth me / the grete clobbed staues 3088
 And crieth / slee the dogges euerichon
 And breke hem / bothe bak and euery bon
 And if þat / any neighebore / of myne
 Wol nat in chirche / to my wyf enclyne 3092
 Or be so hardy / to hire to trespace
 Whan she cometh / she raumpeth in my face
 And crieth / false coward wreke thy wyf
 By corpus bones / I wol haue thy knyf 3096
 And thou shalt haue my distaf / and go spynne
 ffro day to nyght^t right thus she wol bigynne
 Allas she seith / þat euere þat I was shape
 To wedden a Milksope / or a coward Ape 3100
 That wol been ouer-lad / of euery wight^t
 Thou darst nat stonden / by thy wyues right^t
 This is my lif^t but if þat I wol fighte
 And out at dore / anon I moot me dighte 3104
 Or ellis I am but lost^t but if þat I
 Be lyk a wilde leon / fool hardy
 I woot wel / she wol do me sle som day
 Som neighebore / and thanne go my way 3108
 ffor I am perilous / with knyf in honde
 Al be it^t that I dar nat hire withstonde

ffor she is big in armes / by my feith
 That shal he fynde / þat hire mysdooth / or seith 3112
 But lat vs passe away / fro this matere
 ¶ My lord the Monk quod he / be myrie of cheere
 ffor / ye shul telle a tale trewely [leaf 88, back]
 Lo / Rouchestre / stant heer fasteby 3116
 Ride forth myn owene lord / brek nat oure game
 But by my trouthe / I knowe nat youre name
 Wher shal I calle yow / my lord Dann Iohn
 Or dann Thomas / or ellis Dann Alboun 3120
 Of what hous be ye / by youre fader kyn
 I vow to god / thow hast a ful fair skyn
 It is a gentil pasture / ther thow goost'
 Thow art nat lyk' a penannt' or a goost' 3124
 Vp-on my feith / thow art som Officer
 Som worthy Sexteyn / or som Celerer
 ffor by my fader soule / as to my doom
 Thow art a maister / whan thou art at hom 3128
 No poure Cloistrer / ne no novys
 But a gouernour / wily and wys
 And ther with al / of brawnes & of bones
 A wel farynge persone / for the nones 3132
 I prey god / yeue hym confusioñ
 That first thee broghte / vn-to Religioñ
 Thow woldest han been a tredefoul aright'
 Haddestow / as greet a leue as thow hast myght' 3136
 To perfourne / al thy lust in engendrure
 Thow haddest bigeten / ful many a creature
 Allas / why werestow so wyd a cope
 God yeue me sorwe / but and I were a Pope 3140
 Nat oonly thow / but euery myghty man
 Thogh he were shore / ful hye vp on his pan
 Sholde haue a wyf' for al the world is lorn
 Religion / hath take vp al the corn 3144
 Of tredyng' and we borel men been shrympes
 Of feble trees / ther comen wrecched ympes

This maketh / þat oure heires beth so sklendre
 And feble / þat they may nat wel engendre 3148
 This maketh / þat oure wyues wole assaye
 Religious folk / for ye mowe bettre paye
 Of Venus paiementz / than may we
 God woot no lussheburgh payen ye 3152
 But be nat wrooth my Lord / thogh þat I pleye
 fful ofte in game / a sooth I haue herd seye
 ¶ This worthy Monk / took al in pacience [leaf 89]
 And seyde / I wol doon al my diligence 3156
 As fer / as sowneth in to honestee
 To telle yow a tale / or two / or three
 And if yow list to herkne hiderward
 I wol yow seyn / the lyf of Seint Edward 3160
 Or ellis first tragedies wol I telle
 Of whiche / I haue an hundred in my Celle
 Tragedie is to seyn / a certeyn storie
 As olde bokes / maken vs memorie 3164
 Of hym / þat stood in greet prosperitee
 And is yfallen / out of heigh degree
 In to myserie / and endeth wrecchedly
 And they been / versified comunly 3168
 Of .vj. feet whiche men clepyn Exametron
 In prose eek been endited many oon
 And eek in metre / in many a sondry wise
 Lo this declaryng oghte ynogh suffise 3172
 ¶ Now herkneþ / if yow liketh for to heere
 But first I yow biseke / in this matere
 Though I by ordre / telle nat thise thynges
 Be it of Popes / Emperours / or Kynges 3176
 After hir ages / as men writen fynde
 But telle hem / som bifore / and som bihynde
 As it now cometh / vn-to my remembrance
 Haueth me excused / of myn ignorance 3180

¶ Here bigynneth the Monkes tale.

I Wol biwaille / in manere of Tragedie
 The harm of hem / that stode in heigh degree
 And fillen so / that ther nas no remedie
 To brynge hem / out of hire Aduersitee 3184
 ffor certeyn / whan þat ffortune list to flee
 Ther may no man / the cours of hire withholde
 Lat no man triste / on blynd prosperitee
 Beth war / by thise ensamples trewe and olde 3188

[*Lucifer.*]

AT lucifer / thogh he an Aungel were [leaf 89, back]
 And nat a man / at hym I wol bigynne
 ffor thogh ffortune / may noon Aungel dere
 ffrom heigh degree / yet fil he for his synne 3192
 Doun in to Helle / where as he yet is Inne
 O Lucifer / brightest of Aungels alle
 Now artow Sathanas / that mayst nat twynne
 Out of Miserie / in which þat thou art falle 3196

[*Adam.*]

Lo Adam in the feld of Damysse
 With godes owne fynger wrowt was he .. [this stanza is in the
 margin in a later
 15th-century hand]
 And nat bygeten of mannes sperme vnclene ..
 And welte al paradiis sauyng o tree .. 3200
 Had neuer wordly man so hey degree ..
 As Adam til he for mysgouernance ..
 Was dryue owt of his hey prosperitee ..
 To labour and to helle and to meschance 3204

[*Sampson.*]

LO Sampson / which that was anunciat^t Sampson.
 By the Aungel / longe er his natiuitee
 And was / to god almyghty consecrat^t
 And stood in noblesse / whil that he myghte see 3208
 Was neuere swich another / as was he
 To speke of strengthe / and ther-with hardynesse
 But to hise wyues / tolde he his secree
 Thurgh which / he slow hym self for wrecchednesse 3212

¶ Sampson / this noble almyghty champion
 With-uten wepne / saue hise hondes tweye
 He slow / and al to-rente the leon
 Toward his weddyng^t walkynge by the weye 3216
 His false wyf / koude hym so plese and preye
 Til she his conseil knew / and she vntrewe
 Vn-to his foos / his conseil gan biwrewe
 And hym forsook / and took another newe 3220

¶ Thre hundred foxes / took Sampson for Ire
 And alle hir tayles / he togydre bond
 And sette the foxes tayles / alle on fire
 ffor he on euery tayl / hadde knyht a brond 3224
 And they brende / alle the cornes in that Lond
 And alle hire Olyueris / and Vynes eke
 A thousand men / he slow with his hond
 And hadde no wepne / but an Asses cheke 3228

¶ Whan they were slayn / so thursted hym / þat he
 Was wel ny lorn / for which he gan to preye
 That god / wolde on his peyne / haue som pitee
 And sende hym drynke / or ellis moste he deye 3232
 And of this Asses cheke / that was drewe
 Out of a wang^t tooth / sprang anon a welle
 Of which he drank ynogh / shortly to seye
 Thus heelp hym god / as Iudicum kan telle 3236

¶ By verray force / at Gazan / on a nyght [leaf 90]
 Maugree Philistiens / of that Citee
 The gates of the toun / he hath vp plight
 And on his bak' ycaried hem hath he 3240
 Hye on an hilt / where as men myght hem se
 O noble almyghty Sampsoñ / leef and deere
 Had thow nat toold / to wommen thy secree
 In al this world / ne hadde been thy peere 3244

¶ This Sampsoñ / neuere Ciser drank ne wyn
 Ne on his heed / cam Rasour noon ne shere
 By *precept* of the Messenger deuyñ
 ffor alle his strengthes / in his herys were 3248
 And fully .xx. wynter / yeer by yere
 He hadde of Israel / the gouernance
 But soone / shal he wepe many a teere
 ffor wommen / shul hym bryngen to meschaunce 3252

¶ Vn-to his lemman Dalida / he tolde
 That in his herys / al his strengthe lay
 And falsly / to his fomen she hym solde
 And slepynge in hir barm / vp on a day 3256
 She made to clippe / or shere his heer away
 And made his fomen / al this craft espieñ
 And whan þat they / hym fond in this array
 They bounde hym faste / and putten out his eyen 3260

¶ But/ er his heer / was clipped or yshaue
 Ther was no bond / with which / men myghte hym bynde
 But now is he / in prisone in a Caue
 Where as they made hym / at the querne grynde 3264
 O noble Sampsoñ / strengest of mankynde
 O whilom / Iuge in glorie / and in richesse
 Now / maystow wepen / with thyne eyen blynde
 Sith thow fro wele / art falle in wrecchednesse 3268

¶ The ende of this caytif was as I shal seye
 His fomen / made a feste vp-on a day
 And made hym as hire fool / bifore hem pleye
 And this was / in a temple of greet array 3272
 But atte laste / he made a foul affray
 ffor he two pilers shook / and made hem falle
 And doun fil temple and al / and there it lay
 And slow hym self / and eek his fomen alle 3276

¶ This is to seyn / the Prynces euerychon [leaf 90, back]
 And eek thre thousand bodies / were ther slayn
 With fallyng^t of the grete temple of stoon
 Of Sampson / now wol I namoore sayn 3280
 Beth war by this ensample / old and playn
 That no men / telle hir conseil / til hir wyues
 Of swich thyng^t as they wolde han secree fayn
 If þat it touche / hir lymes / or hir lyues 3284

[*Hercules.*]

¶ Of hercules / the souereyn conquerour ¶ Hercules.
 Syngen hise werkes / laude and heigh renoun
 ffor in his tyme / of strengthe he was the flour
 He slow / and rafte the skyn fro the leoun 3288
 He of Centauros / leyde the boost adown
 He Arpies slow / the cruel briddes felle
 The golden Apples / rafte of the dragoun
 He drow out Cerberus / the hound of helle 3292

¶ He slow the cruel tyrant^t Busirus
 And made his hors / to frete hym flessch and bon
 He slow the firy serpent venymus
 Of Achilois two hornes / he brak oon 3296
 And he slow Cakus / in a Caue of stoon
 He slow the geant^t. Antheus the stronge
 He slow the grisly boor / and that anon
 And bar the heuene / on his nekke longe 3300

¶ Was neuere wight^t sith þat this world bigan
 That slew so manye monstres / as dide he
 Thurgh-out this wide world / his name ran
 What for his strengthe / and for his heigh bountee 3304
 And euery Reawme / wente he for to se
 He was so strong^t þat no man myghte hym lette
 At bothe the worldes endes / seith Trophee / ¶ Ille vates Calde-
 In stede of boundes / he a piler sette orum Trophens. 3308

¶ A lemman / hadde this noble champion
 That highte Dian[i]ra / fressh as May
 And as thise clerkes / maken mencion
 She hath hym sent a sherte / fressh and gay 3312
 Allas this sherte / allas and weylaway
 Enuenymed was / so subtilly with alle
 That er þat he / hadde wered it half a day
 It made his flessch / al from hise bones falle 3316

¶ But natheles / somme clerkes hire excusen [leaf 91]
 By oon þat highte Nessus / þat it maked
 Be as be may / I wol hire noght accusen
 But on his bak^t the sherte he wered al naked 3320
 Til þat his flessch / was for the venym blaked
 And whan he say / noon oother remedie
 In hote coles / he hath hym seluen raked
 ffor with no venym / deigned hym to dye 3324

¶ Thus starf / this worthy myghty Hercules
 Lo who may truste on ffortune / any throwe
 ffor hym þat folweth / al this world of prees
 Er he be war / is ofte yleyd ful lowe 3328
 fful wys is he / þat kan hym seluen knowe
 Beth war / for whan þat ffortune list to glose
 Thanne waiteth she / hir man to ouerthrowe
 By swich a wey / as he wolde leest suppose 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

The myghty trone / the precious tresor / Nabugodonosor
 The glorious ceptre / and roial maiestee
 That hadde / the kyng Nabugodonosor
 With tonge / vnnethe / may discryued be 3336
 He twies / wan Ierusalem the Citee
 The vessel of the temple / he with hym ladde
 At Babiloigne / was his souereyn see
 In which / his glorie / and his delit he hadde 3340

¶ The faireste children / of the blood roial
 Of Israel / he leet do gelde anon
 And maked ech of hem / to been his thral
 Amonges othere / Danyel was oon 3344
 That was / the wiseste child of euerychoon
 ffor he the dremes / of the kyng expowned
 Ther as in Chaldeye / clerk/ ne was ther noon
 That wiste / to what fyn his dremes sowned 3348

¶ This proude kyng^t leet make a Statue of gold
 Sixty cubites long^t and Seuene in brede
 To which ymage / he bothe yong^t and old
 Comanded to loute / and haue in drede 3352
 Or in a fourneys / ful of flambes rede
 He shal be brend / that wolde noght obeye
 But neuere / wolde assente to that dede
 Danyel / ne hise yonge felawes tweye 3356

¶ This kyng of kynges / proud was and elat^t [leaf 91, back]
 He wende / that god / þat sit in magestee
 Ne myghte hym nat bireue / of his estat
 But sodeynly / he loste his dignytee 3360
 And lyk a beest^t hym semed for to be
 And eet hey as an Oxe / and lay ther oute
 In reyn / with wilde beestes walked he
 Til certeyn tyme / was ycome aboute 3364

¶ And lyk an Egles fetheres / wax hise herys
 Hise nayles / lyk a briddes clawes weere
 Til god relessed hym / a *certeyn* yerys
 And yaf hym wit^t and thanne *with* many a teere 3368
 He thanked god / and euere his lyf in feere
 Was he to doon amys / or moore trespase
 And til that tyme / he leyd was on his beere
 He knew / that god / was ful of myght & grace 3372

[*Belshazzar.*]

¶ **H**is sone / which that highte Balthasar / Balthasar /
 That heeld the regne / after his fader day
 He by his fader / koude noght be war
 ffor proud he was / of herte and of array 3376
 And eek an ydolastre / was he ay
 His hye estat / assured hym in pryde
 But ffortune caste hym down / and ther he lay
 And sodeynly / his regne gan dyuyde 3380

¶ A feste he made / vn-to hise lordes alle
 Vp-on a tyme / and made hem blithe be
 And thanne hise Officers / gan he calle
 Gooth bryngeth forth / the vessels quod he 3384
 Whiche that my fader / in his prosperitee
 Out of the temple of Ierusalem / birafte
 And to oure hye goddes / thanke we
 Of honour / that oure eldres / *with* vs lafte 3388

¶ His wyf / hise lordes / and hise concubynes
 Ay dronken / whil hire appetites laste
 Out of thise noble vessels / sondry wynes
 And on a wal / this kyng^t hise eyen caste 3392
 And say an hand armlees / that wroot ful faste
 ffor feere of which / he quook / and siked soore
 This hand / *pat* Balthasar so soore agaste
 Wroot^t Mane techel phares / and namoore 3396

¶ In al that land / Magicien was noon [leaf 92]

That koude expounde / what that lettre mente

But Danyel / expowned it anoon

And seyde / Kyng^t god to thy fader lente 3400

Glorie / and honour / regne / tresor / rente

And he was proud / and no thyng god ne dradde

And ther-fore / god greet wreche vp-on hym sente

And hym birefte / the regne þat he hadde 3404

¶ He was out cast^t of mannes compaignye

With Asses / was his habitacioñ

And eet hey as a beest^t in weet and drye

Til þat he knew / by grace / and by resoñ 3408

That god of heuene / han domynacioñ

Ouer euery regne / and euery creature

And thanne / hadde god of hym compassioñ

And hym restored / his regne and his figure 3412

¶ Eke / thow that art his sone / art proud also

And knowest^t Alle thise thynges verraily

And art rebel to god / and art his fo

Thow drank eek / of his vessel boldely 3416

Thy wyf eke / and thy wenches synfully

Dronke of the same vessels / sondry wynys

And heriest false goddes cursedly

Therefore to thee / yshapen ful greet pyne is 3420

¶ This hand was sent fro god / that on the wal

Wroot Mane techel phares / truste me

Thy regne is doon / thow weyest noght at al

Dyuyded is thy regne / and it shal be 3424

To Medes and to Perses / yeuen quod he

And thilke same nyght^t this kyng was slawe

And Darius / occupieth his degree

Though he ther to / hadde neither right ne lawe 3428

¶ Lordynges / ensample heer-by may ye take
 How that in lordshipe / is no sikernesse
 ffor whan ffortune / wol a man forsake
 She bereth away / his regne and his richesse 3432
 And eke hise freendes / bothe moore and lesse
 ffor what man / þat hath freendes thurgh ffortune
 Mishape / wol make hem enemys I gesse
 This prouerbe / is ful sooth / and ful commune 3436

[*Zenobia.*]

CEnobia / of Palymerie queene [leaf 92, back]
 As writen Perciens / of hir noblesse
 So worthy was in Armes / and so keene
 That no wight^t passed hire in hardynesse 3440
 Ne in lynage / ne oother gentilesse
 Of kynges blood of Perce / is she descended
 I sey nat^t þat she hadde moost fairnesse
 But of hir shape / she myghte nat been amended 3444

¶ ffrom hire childhede / I fynde þat she fledde
 Office of wommen / and to wode she wente
 And many / a wilde hertes blood she shedde
 With Arwes brode / that she to hem sente 3448
 She was so swift^t þat she anon hem hente
 And whan þat she was elder / she wolde kille
 Leons / Leopardes / and Beres al torente
 And in hir Armes / welde hem at hir wille 3452

¶ Sche dorste / wilde beestes dennes seke
 And rennen in the montaynes / al the nyght^t
 And slepen vnder the buss^h / and she koude eke
 Wrastlen / by verray force / and verray myght^t 3456
 With any yong man / were he neuer so wight^t
 Ther myghte no thyng^t in hir armes stonde
 She kepte hir maydenhede / from euery wight^t.
 To no man / deigned hire to be bonde 3460

¶ But atte laste / hir freendes han hire maryed
 To Onedake / a prynce of that contree
 Al were it so / that she hem longe taryed
 And ye shal vnderstande / how þat he 3464
 Hadde swiche fantasies / as hadde she
 But natheles / whan they weere kny^{simul}t in feere
 They lyued / in ioye / and in felicitee
 ffor ech of hem / hadde oother lief and deere 3468

¶ Saue o thyng^t that she wolde neuere assente
 By no wey / that he sholde by hire lye
 But ones / for it was hir pleyn entente
 To haue a child / the world to multiplie 3472
 And also soone / as that she myghte espye
 That she was nat with childe / with that dede
 Thanne wolde she suffren hym doon his fantasye
 Eft soone / and noght but ones / out of drede 3476

¶ And if she were with childe / at thilke cast^t [leaf 93]
 Namore / sholde he pleyen thilke game
 Til fully / .xl. dayes weren past^t
 Thanne wolde she ones / suffre hym do the same 3480
 Al were this Onedake / wilde / or tame
 He gat namore of hire / for thus she seyde
 It was to wyues / lecherie and shame
 In oother cas / if þat men with hem pleyde 3484

¶ Two sones / by this Onedake hadde she
 The whiche she kepte / in vertu and lettrure
 But now / vn-to oure tale turne we
 I seye / so worshipful a creature 3488
 And wys ther-with / and large with mesure
 So penyble in the werre / and curteis eke
 Ne moore labour / myghte in werre endure
 Was noon / thogh al this world men sholde seke 3492

¶ Hir riche array / ne myghte nat be toold
 As wel in vessel / as in hire clothyng
 She was al clad / in perree and in gold
 And eek she lafte noght for noon huntynge 3496
 To haue / of sondry tonges ful knowyng
 Whan þat she leyser hadde / and for to entende
 To lerne bookes / was al hir likyng
 How she in vertu / myghte hir lyf despende 3500

¶ And shortly / of this storie for to trete
 So doughty was hire housbonde / and eek she
 That they conquered / manye regnes grete
 In thorient with many a fair Citee 3504
 Appertenant vn-to the magestee
 Of Rome / and with strong hond / heeld hem ful faste
 Ne neuere myghte / hir fomen / doon hem flee
 Ay / whil that Onedakes dayes laste 3508

¶ Hir batailles / who so list hem for to rede
 Agayn Sapor the kyng / and othere mo
 And how / þat al this proces / fil in dede
 Why she conquered / and what title ther to 3512
 And after / of hire meschief and hire wo
 How that she was / biseged and ytake
 Lat hym / vn-to my maister Petrak go
 That writ ynow of this / I vndertake 3516

¶ Whan Onedake was deed / she myghtily [leaf 93, back]
 The regnes heeld / and with hire propre hond
 Agayns hir foos / she faught so cruelly
 That ther nas kyng ne Prince in al that lond 3520
 That he nas glad / if he þat grace fond
 That she ne wolde / vp-on his land werreye
 With hire / they made alliance by bond
 To been in pees / and lete hire ryde and pleye 3524

¶ The Emperour of Rome / Claudius
 Ne hym biforn / the Romain Galien
 Ne dorsten neuere / been so corageus
 Ne noon Ermyn / ne noon Egipcien 3528
 No Surryen / ne noon Arabien
 With-Inne the feeldes / þat dorste with hire fighte
 Lest þat she wolde / hem with hir handes slen
 Or with hire meynce / putten hem to flighte 3532

¶ In kynges habit wenten hire sones two
 As heires / of hir fadres regnes alle
 And Hermanno / and Thymalao
 Hir names weere / as Persiens hem calle 3536
 But ay ffortune / hath in hire hony galle
 This myghty queene / may no while endure
 ffortune / out of hir regne made hire falle
 To wrecchednesse / and to mysaventure 3540

¶ Aurelian / whan þat the gouernance
 Of Rome / cam in-to hise handes tweye
 He shoope / vp-on this queene / to doon vengeance
 And with his legions / he took his weye 3544
 Toward Cenobie / and shortly for to seye
 He made hire flee / and atte laste hire hente
 And fettred hire / and eek hire children tweye
 And wan the land / and hoom to Rome he wente 3548

¶ Amonges othere thynges / that he wan
 His Chaar / þat was with gold wrought & perree
 This grete Romain / this Aurelian
 Hath with hym lad / for þat men sholde it see 3552
 Biforn his triumphe / walketh she
 With gilte cheynes / on hire nekke hangynge
 Corowned was she / as after hire degree
 And ful of perree / charged hir clothyng 3556

¶ Allas ffortune / she that whilom was [leaf 94]
 Dredeful / to kynges / and to Emperoures
 Now gawreth al the peple / on hire allas
 And she that helmed was / in starke stoures 3560
 And wan by force / townes stronge and toures
 Shal on hire heed / now were a vitremyte
 And she þat bar / the Ceptre ful of floures
 Shal bere a distaf hire cost for to quyte 3564

[The modern instances which should come here, are at the end of the Tale in this MS.]

[Nero.]

Al though / that Nero were vicius / De Nerone
 As any feend / that lyth ful lowe adown 3654
 Yet he / as telleth vs Swetonius
 This wide world / hadde in subieccioun 3656
 Bothe Est and West North / and Septemtrioun
 Of Rubies / Saphires / and of perles white
 Were alle hise clothes / browded vp and doun
 ffor he in gemmes / greetly gan delite 3660

¶ Moore delicat moore pompous of array
 Moore proud / was neuere Emperour than he
 That ilke clooth / that he hadde weryd o day
 After that tyme / he nolde it neuere see 3664
 Nettes of gold threed / hadde he greet plentee
 To fisshen in Tybre / whan hym liste pleye
 Hise lustes were al lawe / in his decree
 ffor ffortune / as his freend / hym wolde obeye 3668

¶ He Rome brende / for his delicacie
 The Senatours / he slow vp-on a day
 To heere / how þat men wolde wepe & crye
 And slow his brother / and by his suster lay 3672
 His moder he made / in pitous array
 ffor he hire wombe slytte / to biholde
 Where he conceyued was / so weilaway
 That he so litel / of his moder tolde 3676

¶ No teere out of hise eyen / for that sighte
 Ne cam / but seyde / a fair womman was she
 Greet wonder is / how þat he koude / or myghte
 Be domesman / of hire dede beautee 3680
 The wyn to bryngen hym / comanded he
 And drank anoon / noon oother wo he made
 Whan myght^t is ioyned / vn-to crueltee
 Allas to depe / wol the venym wade 3684

[¶] In youthe / a maister hadde this Emperour [leaf 94, back]
 To teche hym lettrure / and curteisye
 ffor of moralitee / he was the flour
 As in his tyme / but if bookes lye 3688
 And whil this maister / hadde of hym maistrye
 He maked hym / so louyng^t and so souple
 That longe tyme it was / er tirannye
 Or any vice / dorste in hym vncouple 3692

¶ This Seneca / of which þat I deuyse
 By cause Nero / hadde of hym swich drede
 ffor he fro vices / wolde hym ay chastise
 Discretly / as by word / and nat by dede 3696
 Sire wolde he seyn / an Emperour moot nede
 Be vertuous / and hate tirannye
 ffor which he in a bath / made hym to blede
 On bothe hise armes / til he moste dye 3700

¶ This Nero / hadde eek / of acustumance
 In youthe / agayns his maister for to rise
 Which afterward / hym thoughte a greet greuance
 Therfore / he made hym dyen in this wise 3704
 But nathelees / this Seneca the wise
 Chees / in a bath / to dye in this manere
 Rather than han / another tormentrise
 And thus hath Nero / slayn his maister deere 3708

¶ Now fil it so / that ffortune liste no lenger
 The hye pride of Nero / to cherice
 ffor thogh þat he was strong/ yet was she strenger
 She thoghte thus / by god I am to nyce 3712
 To sette a man / that is fulfild of vice
 In heigh degree / and Emperour hym calle
 By god / out of his sete I wol hym trice
 Whan he leest weneth / sonnest shal he falle 3716

¶ The peple roos / vp on hym / on a nyght
 ffor his defaute / and whan he it espied
 Out of his dores / anon he hath hym dight
 Allone / and there he wende han been allyed 3720
 He knocked faste / and ay the moore he cryed
 The faster shette they / the dores alle
 ffor drede of this / hym thoughte þat he dyed
 And wente his wey / no lenger dorste he calle 3724

¶ The peple cryde / and rombled vp and down [leaf 95]
 That with hise erys / herde he / how they seyde
 Where is this false tirant this Neroun
 ffor fere almoost out of his wit he breyde 3728
 And to hise goddes / pitously he preyde
 ffor socour / but it myghte noght bityde
 ffor drede of this / hym thoughte þat he deyde
 And ran in to a gardyn / hym to hyde 3732

¶ And in this gardyn / foond he cherles tweye
 That seten by a fyr / greet and reed
 And to thise cherlis two / he gan to preye
 To sleen hym / and to girden of his heed 3736
 That to his body / whan þat he were deed
 Were no despit ydoon / for his defame
 Hym self he slow / he koude no bettre reed
 Of which / ffortune / lough and hadde a game 3740

[*Holofernes.*]

¶ Was neuere Capitayn / vnder a kyng / De Oloferno
 That regnes mo / putte in subieccioun
 Ne strengre was in feeld / of alle thyng
 As in his tyme / ne gretter of renoun 3744
 Ne moore pompous / in heigh presumpcioun
 Than Oloferne / which ffortune ay kiste
 So likerously / and ladde hym vp and doun
 Til þat his heed was of / er that he wiste 3748

¶ Nat oonly / that this world hadde hym in awe
 ffor lesynge / of richesse / or libertee
 But made euery man / reneyen his lawe
 Nabugodonosor / was god seyde he 3752
 Noon oother god / sholde adoured be
 Agayns this heste / no wight dorste trespase
 Saue in Bethulia / a strong Citee // Et fecerunt filij Israel / secundum
 quod constituerat eis sacerdos dom-
 Where Eliachym / a preest was of that place ini Eliachym

¶ But tak kepe / of the deeth of Oloferne
 Amydde his oost he dronke lay a nyght
 With-Inne his tente / large as is a berne
 And yet for al his pompe / and al his myght 3760
 Iudith a womman / as he lay vpright
 Slepynge / his heed of smoot and from his tente
 fful pryuely she stal / from euery wight
 And with his heed / vn-to hir toun she wente 3764

[*Antiochus.*]

¶ What nedeth it of kyng Anthiochus [leaf 95, back]
 To telle / his hye Roial magestee
 His hye pryde / hise werkes venymus
 ffor swich another / was ther noon as he 3768
 Reed which that he was / in Machabee
 And reed / the proude wordes / þat he seyde
 And why he fil / fro heigh prosperitee
 And in an Hille / how wrecchedly he deyde 3772

¶ ffortune / hym hadde enchaunted so in pride
 That verraily / he wende he myghte attayne
 Vn-to the sterres / vp on euery syde
 And in balance / weyen ech montayne 3776
 And alle the floodes / of the see restrayne
 And goddes peple / hadde he moost in hate
 Hem wolde he sleen / in torment^t and in payne
 Wenynge / that god ne myghte / his pryde abate 3780

¶ And for that Nichanore / and Thymothe
 Of Iewes / weren venquysshed myghtily
 Vn-to the Iewes / swich an hate hadde he
 That he bad greithe his Chaar ful hastily 3784
 And swoor / and seyde ful despitously
 Vn-to Ierusalem / he wolde eft soone
 To wreken his Ire / on it ful cruelly
 But of his purpos / he was let ful soone 3788

¶ God for his manace / hym so soore smoot^t
 With invisible wounde / ay incurable
 That in hise guttes / carf it so and boot^t
 That hise peynes / weren inportable 3792
 And *certeinly* / the wreche was resonable
 ffor many a mannes guttes / dide he peyne
 But from his purpos / cursed and dampnable
 ffor al his smert^t he wolde hym nat restreyne 3796

¶ But bad anon / apparailen his hoost
 And sodeynly / er he was of it war
 God daunted / al his pride / and al his boost^t
 ffor he / so soore fil / out of his char 3800
 That it hise lymes / and his skyn ^{lacerauit} totar
 So þat / he neither myghte go ne ryde
 But in a chayer / men aboute hym bar
 Al forbrused / bothe bak and syde 3804

¶ The wreche of god / hym smoot so cruelly [leaf 96]
 That thurgh his body / wikked wormes crepte
 And ther with al / he stank so horribly
 That noon / of al his meynee þat hym kepte 3808
 Wheither so he wook / or ellis slepte
 Ne myghte noght for stynk of hym endure
 Is this meschief / he wayled and eek wepte
 And knew god / lord of euery creature 3812

¶ To al his hoost and to hym self also
 fful wlatom / was the stynk of his careyne
 No man / ne myght hym bere to ne fro
 And in this stynk and this horrible peyne 3816
 He starf ful wrecchedly / in a monteyne
 Thus hath this Robbour / and this homycide
 That many a man / made to wepe and pleyne
 Swich gerdon / as bilongeth vn-to pryde 3820

[*Alexander the Great.*]

The Storie of Alisandre / is so commune / De Alexandro
 That euery wight þat hath discreciō
 Hath herd som-what or al / of his fortune
 This wide world / as in conclusiō 3824
 He wan by strengthe / or for hys hye renoñ
 They were glad / for pees vn-to hym sende
 The pryde / of man and beest / he leyde adoun
 Where so he cam / vn-to the worldes ende 3828

¶ Comparison / myghte neuere yet ben maked
 Bitwixe hym / and another Conquerour
 ffor al this world / for drede of hym hath quaked
 He of knyghthod / and of fredom flour 3832
 ffortune hym made / the heir of hire honour
 Saue wyn and wommen / no thyng myghte aswage
 His hye entente / in armes and labour
 So was he ful / of leonyn corage 3836

¶ What prys were it to hym / thogh I yow tolde
 Of Darius / and an hundred thousand mo
 Of kynges / Prynces / Dukes / Erles bolde
 Whiche he conquered / and broghte hem in-to wo 3840
 I seye / as fer / as man may ride or go
 The world was his / what sholde I moore deuyse
 ffor thogh I write / or tolde yow euere mo
 Of his knyghthode / it myghte nat suffise 3844

[T]welf yeer he regned / as seith Machabee [leaf 96, back]
 Philippes sone of Macidoynes / he was
 That first was kyng in Grece the contree
 O worthy / gentil Alisandre allas 3848
 That euere / sholde fallen swich a cas
 Empoysoned / of thyn owene folk thow weere
 Thyn sys / ffortune hath turned in-to Aas
 And for thee / ne weep she neuer a teere 3852

¶ Who shal me yeue teeris / to compleyne
 The deeth / of gentillesse / and of franchise
 That al this world / weldid in his demeyne
 And yet hym thoughte / it myghte nat suffise 3856
 So ful was his corage / of heigh emprise
 Allas / who shal me helpe to endite
 ffalse ffortune / and poyson to despise
 The whiche two / of al this wo I wyte 3860

[*Julius Cæsar.*]

By wisdom / manhede / and by greet labour / De Iulio
 ffrom humble bed / to Roial magestee Cesare
 Vp roos / he Iulius the Conquerour
 That wan al the Occident by land and see 3864
 By strengthe of hond / or ellis by tretee
 And vn-to Rome / made hem tributarie
 And sith of Rome / the Emperour was he
 Til that ffortune / weex his Aduersarie 3868

¶ O myghty Cesar / that in Thessalie
 Agayn Pompeus / fader thyn in lawe
 That of thorient hadde al the chiualrie
 As fer / as þat the day bigynneth dawē 3872
 Thow / thurgh thy knyghthod / hast hem take & slawe
 Saue fewe folk þat with Pompeus fledde
 Thurgh which / thow puttest al Thorient in Awe
 Thanke ffortune / that so wel thee spedde 3876

¶ But now a litel while / I wol biwaille
 This Pompeus / this noble gouvernour
 Of Rome / which þat fleigh at this bataille
 I seye / oon of hise men / a fals traitour 3880
 His heed of smoot / to wynnen hym fauour
 Of Iulius / and hym the heed he broghte
 Allas Pompeie / of Thorient conquerour
 That ffortune / vn-to swich a fyn thee broghte 3884

¶ To Rome agayn / repaireth Iulius [leaf 97]
 With his triumphe / lauriat ful hye
 But on a tyme / Brutus Cassius
 That euere hadde / of his heighe estat enuye 3888
 fful pryuely / hath maad conspiracie
 Agayns this Iulius / in subtil wise
 And caste the place / in which he sholde dye
 With Boydekyns / as I shal yow deuyse 3892

¶ This Iulius / to the Capitolie wente
 Vp-on a day / as he was wont to goon
 And in the Capitolie / anon hym hente
 This false Brutus / and hise othere foon 3896
 And stiked hym / with Boydekyns anon
 With many a wounde / and thus they lete hym lye
 But neuere gronte he / at no strook but oon
 Or ellis at two / but if his storie lye 3900

¶ So manly / was this Iulius of herte
 And so wel / louede estatly honestee
 And thogh hise deedly woundes / so sore smerte
 His mantel ouer his hipes / caste he 3904
 ffor no man / sholde seen his pryuetee
 And as he lay / of dyyng in a traunce
 And wiste verrailly that deed was he
 Of honestee / yet hadde he remembraunce 3908

¶ Lucan. / to thee this storie I recomende
 And to Sweton / and to Valerius also
 That of this storie / writen word & ende
 How that to thise grete Conquerours two 3912
 ffortune / was first freend / and siththe a foo
 No man ne triste / vp-on hire fauour longe
 But haue hire / in awayt for euere mo
 Witnesse / on alle thise Conquerours stronge 3916

[*Cresus.*]

This riche Cresus / whilom kyng of Lyde [Cresus]
 Of which Cresus / Cirus soore hym dradde
 Yet was he caught amyddes al his pryde
 And to be brent / men to the fyr hym ladde 3920
 But swich a reyn / down fro the welkne shadde
 That slow the fyr / and made hym to escape
 But to be war / no grace yet he hadde
 Til ffortune / on the galwes made hym gape 3924

[¹Wh]anne he escaped was / he kan nat stente [¹Rats. lf 97, bk]
 ffor to bigynne / a newe werre agayn
 He wende wel / for þat ffortune hym sente
 Swich hape / that he escaped thurgh the rayn 3928
 That of his foos / he myghte nat be slayn
 And eek a sweuene / vp-on a nyght he mette
 Of which / he was so proud / and eek so fayn
 That in vengeance / he al his herte sette 3932

¶ Vp on a tree he was / as þat hym thoughte
 Ther Iuppiter hym wessh / bothe bak and syde
 And Phebus eek / a fair towaille hym broughte
 To drye hym with / and ther-fore wax his pryde 3936
 And to his doghter / that stood hym bisyde
 Which that he knew / in heigh sentence habounde
 And bad hire telle hym / what it signyfide
 And she his dreem / bigan right thus expounde 3940

¶ The tree quod she / the galwes is to mene
 And Iuppiter / bitokneth snow and reyn
 And Phebus / with his towaille so clene
 Tho been / the sonnes stremes for to seyn 3944
 Thow shalt an hanged be / fader certeyn
 Reyn shal thee wasshe / and sonne shal thee drye
 Thus warned hym / ful plat and ful pleyn
 His doghter / which þat called was Phanye 3948

¶ An hanged was Cresus / the proude kyng
 His Roial trone / myghte hym nat auaille
 Tragedies noon oother manere thyng
 Ne kan in syngyng / crye ne biwaille 3952
 But þat ffortune / alwey wole assaille
 With vnwar strook / the regnes þat been proude
 ffor whan men trusteth hire / thanne wol she faille
 And couere hire brighte face / with a clowde 3956

[These 4 modern instances ought to follow 'Zenobia,' p. 268.]

[*Peter the Cruel, of Spain.*]

O noble / o worthy Petro / glorie of Spayne De Petro
 Whom ffortune heeld / so heighe in magestee Ispannie
 Wel oghten men / thy pitous deeth complayne
 Out of thy land / thy brother made thee flee 3568
 And after at a sege / by subtiltee
 Thow were bitraysed / and lad vn-to his tente
 Where as he / with his owene hand slow thee
 Succedyng / in thy regne and in thy rente 3572

¶ The feeld of snow / with thegle of blak ther-Inne [leaf 98]
 Caught with the lymrod / coloured as the glede [Bertrand du
 Guesclin.]
 He brew this cursednesse / and al this synne

The wikked nest^t was werkere of this nede 3576

Noght Charles Olyuer / þat took ay hede
 of trouthe and honour / but of Armorike [Oliver de Mauny
 of Britanny.]

Genylon Olyuer / corrupt for mede
 Broghte this worthy kyng^t in swich a brike 3580

[Peter of Cyprus.]

O worthy Petro / kyng of Cipre also De Petro de
 That Alisaundre wan / by heigh maistrie Cipro

fful many an hethen / wroghtestow ful wo
 Of which / thyne owene liges hadde envie 3584

And for no thyng^t but for thy chiualrie
 They in thy bed / han slayn thee by the morwe
 Thus kan ffortune / hire wheel gouerne and gye
 And out of ioie / brynge men to sorwe 3588

[Bernabo Visconti, of Milan.]

Of Melan / grete Barnabo Viscounte / De Barnabo /
 God of delit^t and scourge of Lumbardye

Why sholde I noght^t thyn Infortune acounte
 Sith in estat / thow clombe were so hye 3592

Thy brother sone / that was thy double allye
 ffor he thy Nevew was / and sone in lawe
 With-Inne his prisoñ / made thee to dye
 But why ne how / noot .I. that thow were slawe 3596

[Ugolino, Count of Pisa.]

Of the Erl Hugelyn of Pize / the langour / De hugelyn
 Ther may no tonge / tellen for pitee Comite de Pize

But litel out of Pize / stant a tour
 In which[e] tour / in prisoñ put was he 3600

And with hym been / hise litel children thre
 The eldeste scarsly / fyue yeer was of age

Allas ffortune / it was greet crueltee
 Swiche briddes / for to putte in swich a cage 3604

¶ Dampned was he / to dyen in that prison
 ffor Roger / which þat bisshope was of Pize
 Hadde on hym maad / a fals suggestiō
 Thurgh which the peple / gan vp on hym rise 3608
 And putten hym to prison / in swich wise
 As ye han herd / and mete and drynke he hadde
 So smal / that wel vnnethe it may suffise
 And ther with al / it was ful poure and badde 3612

[¹A]nd on a day bifel / þat in that hour [¹ Rats. leaf 98, back]
 Whan þat his mete / wont was to be broght
 The Gayler / shette the dores of the tour
 He herde it wel / but he spak / right noght 3616
 And in his herte / anon ther fil a thoght
 That they for hunger / wolde doon hym dyen
 Allas quod he / allas þat I was wroght
 Ther with / the teeris fillen from hise eyen 3620

¶ His yonge sone / þat thre yeer was of age
 Vn-to hym seyde / fader / fader / why do ye wepe
 Whanne wol the Gayler / bryngen oure potage
 Is ther no morsel breed / þat ye do kepe 3624
 I am so hungry / that I may nat slepe
 Now wolde god / þat I myghte slepen euere
 Thanne sholde noght hunger / in my wombe crepe
 Ther is no thyng but breed / þat me were leuere 3628

¶ Thus day by day / this child bigan to crye
 Til in his fadres barm / adoun it lay
 And seyde / farewel fader / I moot dye
 And kiste his fader / and deyde the same day 3632
 And whan the woful fader / deed it say
 ffor wo / hise armes two / he gan to byte
 And seyde / allas ffortune and weylaway
 Thy false wheele / my wo al may I wyte 3636

¶ Hise children wende / that it for hunger was
 That he hise armes gnou / and nat for wo
 And seyden fader / do nat so allas
 But rather / ete the flessch vp-on vs two 3640
 Oure flessch thow yaf taak oure flessch vs fro
 And ete ynow / right thus they to hym seyde
 And after that with-Inne a day / or two
 They leyde hem / in his lappe adoun / and deyde 3644

¶ Hym self despeired / eek/ for hunger starf
 Thus ended is / this myghty Erl of Pize
 ffrom heigh estat. ffortune away hym carf
 Of this tragedie / it oghte ynogh suffise 3648
 Who so wole it heere it in a lenger wise
 Redeth / the grete Poete of Ytaille
 That highte Dant. for he kan al deuyse
 ffrom point to point nat o word wol he faille 3652

Here is ended the Monkes tale

¶ This is the Prologe / of the Nonne Prees [tes¹] ^[leaf 99] tale.
^[1 Rats.]

HO quod the knyght' good sire namoore of this
 That ye han seyde / is right ynow ywis
 And muchel moore / for litel heuynesse
 Is right ynow / to mucche folk I gesse ^[no gap in Hengwrt] 3960
 [I seye for me hit is a grete disese ^[MS Reg. 18 C ii, leaf 226]
 where as men han ben in grete welþe & ese
 To heren of her sodeyn fal allas
 And þe contrarie is ioie and grete solace 3964
 As whan a man haþ be in pore estate
 And clymbeth vp and wexeth fortunate
 [And ther/ a-bideth in prosperite.] ^[Harl. 1758, f 192, bk]
 Suche þing is gladsom as hit þinketh me 3968
 And þough suche þing were goodly forto telle
 3e quod oure Oste by seynt poules belle
 3e seie right soth þis monk' he clappeth loude
 He spak' how fortune couered in a cloude 3972
 I not neuere what & also of a treiadie
 Right now 3e herde and parde no remedie
 It is for to be-wayle ne complayne
 That that is doon and also hit is a payne 3976
 As 3e han saide to here of heuynesse
 Sire monk' nomore of þis so god 3ou blesse
 3oure tale annoyeth aþ þis companye
 Suche talkyng' nys not worth a butterflye] ^[MS Reg. ex-tract ends]
 Youre tales / doon vs no desport ne game
 Wherfore sire Monk/ o. daun Piers by youre name
 I prey yow hertely / telle vs som what ellis
 ffor sikerly / nere clynkyng of youre bellis 3984

That on youre bridel hange / on euery syde
 By heuene kyng^t þat for vs alle dyde
 I sholde er this / haue fallen down for sleepe
 Al thogh the slow / hadde neuere ben so deepe 3988
 Thanne hadde youre tale / al be toold in veyn
 ffor certeynly / as þat thise clerkes seyn
 Where as a man / may haue noon audience
 Naught helpeth it^t to tellen his sentence 3992
 And wel I woot^t the substant^ñce is in me
 If any thyng^t shal wel reported be
 Sire / sey som what of huntynge I yow preye
 ¶ Nay quod this Monk^t I haue no lust to pleye 3996
 Now lat another telle / as I haue toold
 ¶ Thanne spak oure hoost^t with rude speche & boold
 And seyde / vn-to the Nonnes preest anon
 Com neer thow preest^t com hider thow sir Ioħn 4000
 Telle vs swich thyng^t as may oure hertes glade
 Be blythe / though thow ryde vp-on a Iade
 What^t though thyn hors / be bothe foul and lene
 If he wol serue thee / rekke nat a bene 4004
 Looke / that thyn herte / be murye euere mo
 ¶ Yis sire quod he / yis hoost so mote I go
 But I be murye / ywis I wol be blamed
 And right anon / his tale he hath attamed 4008
 And thus he seyde / vn-to vs euerichon
 This sweete preest^t this goodly man sir Ioħn

Explicit 𐀚

¶ Here bigynneth the Nonnes preestes tale of the Cok/
and Hen / Chauntecler & Pertelote / [leaf 99, back]

A poore widwe / som del stape in age
was whilom dwellynge / in a narwe cotage 4012
Biside a groue / stondyng in a dale
This widwe / of which I telle yow my tale
Syn thilke day / þat she was last a wyf
In pacience / ladde a ful symple lyf 4016
ffor / litel was hire catel and hire rente
By housbondrye / of swich as god hire sente
She foond hire self / and eek hire doghtren two
Thre large sowes / hadde she and namo 4020
Thre kyn / and eek a sheepe / þat highte Malle
fful sooty was hire bour / and eek hire halle
In which she eet' ful many a sklendre meel
Of poynañt sawce / hir neded neuer a deel 4024
No deyntee morsel / passed thurgh hir throte
Hir diete / was acordant' to hir cote
Repleccioñ / ne made hire neuere syk'
Attempree diete / was al hire phisyk' 4028
And excercise / and hertes suffisaunce
The gowte / lette hire no thyng for to daunce
Napoplexie / shente nat hire heed
No wyn ne drank she / neither whit ne reed 4032
Hire bord was serued / moost *with* whit and blak'
Milk and broun breed / in which she foond no lak
Seynd bacoñ / and som tyme an Ey / or tweye
ffor she was / as it were / a maner deye 4036
A yeerd she hadde / enclosed al aboute
With stikkes / and a drye dych *with*-oute
In which / she hadde a cok/ heet Chañtecler
In al the land / of crowyng nas his peer 4040

His voys was murier / than the myrie Orgon
 On massedayes / þat in the chirche gon
 Wel sikerer / was his crowyng in his logge
 Than is a Clokke / or any Abbey Orlogge 4044
 By nature / he knew ech ascencioñ
 Of equinoxial / in thilke town
 ffor whan degrees .xv. / were ascended [leaf 100]
 Thanne krew he / þat it myghte nat ben amended 4048
 His komb / was redder / than the fyn coral
 And batayled / as it were a Castel wal
 His byle was blak and as the Ieet it shoon
 Lyk Asure / were hise legges and his toon 4052
 Hise nayles whitter / than the lylve flour
 And lyk the burned gold / was his colour
 This gentil cok / hadde in his gouernaunce
 Seuene hennes / for to doon al his plesaunce 4056
 Whiche were hise sustres / and his paramours
 And wonder lyke to hym / as of colours
 Of whiche / the faireste hewed on hire throte
 Was clepid / faire damoysele Pertelote 4060
 Curteys she was / discret / and debonaire
 And compaignable / and bar hir self so faire
 Syn thilke day / þat she was seuen nyght oold
 That trewely / she hath the herte in hoold 4064
 Of Chañtecler / loken in euery lyth
 He loued hire so / þat wel was hym ther with
 But swich a ioie was it to here hem synge
 Whan þat / the brighte sonne gan to sprynge 4068
 In swete acord / my leef / is faren in londe
 ffor thilke tyme / as I haue vnderstonde
 Beestes / and briddes / kouden speke and synge
 And so bifel / þat in a dawenyng 4072
 As Chañtecler / among hise wyues alle
 Sat on his perche / that was in the halle
 And next hym sat this faire Pertelote
 This Chañtecler / gan gronen in his throte 4076

As man / þat in his dreem / is drecched soore
 ¶ And whan þat Pertelote / thus herde hym rore
 She was agast / and seyde herte deere
 What eyleth yow · to grone in this manere 4080
 Ye ben a verray slepere / fy for shame
 ¶ And he answerde / and seyde thus / madame
 I prey yow / þat ye take it nat agrief
 By god me mette / I was in swich meschief 4084
 Right now / þat yet myn herte is soore afright
 Now god quod he / my sweuene recche aright
¹[A]nd kepe my body / out of foul prisoun [¹ Rats. leaf 100, bk]
 Me mette / how that I romed vp and doun 4088
 With-Inne oure yeerd / where as I say a beest
 Was lyk an hound / and wolde han maad arest
 Vp-on my body / and han had me ded
 His colour / was bitwixe yelow and red 4092
 And tipped was his tayl / and bothe hise erys
 With blak vnlik the remenañt of hise herys
 His snowte smal / with glowyng eyen tweye
 Yet of his look for fere almoost I deye 4096
 This caused me / my gronyng doutelees
 ¶ Avoy quod she / fy on yow hertelees
 Allas quod she / for by that god aboue
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my loue 4100
 I kan nat loue a Coward / by my feith
 ffor certes / what so any womman seith
 We alle desiren / if it myghte be
 To han housbondes / hardy / wise and fre 4104
 And secree / and no nygard / ne no fool
 Ne hym / þat is agast of euery tool
 Ne noon auauntour / by that god aboue
 How dorste ye seyn / for shame / vn-to youre loue 4108
 That any thyng myghte make yow aferd
 Haue ye no mannes herte / and han a berd
 Allas / and konne ye ben agast of sweuenys
 No thyng god woot but vanytee in sweuene is 4112

Sweuenes / engendren of replexions
 And ofte / of fume / and of complexions
 Whan humours / ben to habundant in a wight
 Certes this dreem / which ye han met to nyght 4116
 Comth / of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede Colera pardee
 Which causeth folk / to dreden in hir dremes
 Of Arwes / and of fyr with rede lemes 4120
 Of rede bestes / that they wol hem byte
 Of contek and of whelpes grete and lyte
 Right as the humour / of Malencolie
 Causeth ful many a man / in sleepe to crie 4124
 ffor fere of blake beres / or boles blake
 Or ellis / blake deueles wol hem take
 Of othere humours / koude I telle also [leaf 101]
 That werken many a man / in sleep ful wo 4128
 But I wol passe / as lightly as I kan
 Lo Catoñ which þat was so wys a man
 Seyde he nat thus / ne do no fors of dremes
 Now sire quod she / whan we fle fro thise bemes 4132
 ffor goddes loue / as taak som laxatif
 Vp peril of my soule / and of my lif
 I conseile yow the beste / I wol nat lye
 That bothe of Colere / and of Malencolye 4136
 Ye purge yow / and for ye shal nat tarye
 Thogh / in this town / is noon Apothecarye
 I shal my self / to herbes techen yow
 That shul ben / for youre heele and for youre prow 4140
 And in oure yerd / tho herbes shal I fynde
 The whiche han / of hire propretee by kynde
 To purge yow / bynethe and eek aboue
 ffor yet nat this / for goddes owene loue 4144
 Ye ben ful colerik of complexioñ
 Ware the sonne / in his Ascencioñ
 Ne fynde yow nat replet of humours hote
 And if it do / I dar wel leye a grote 4148

That ye shul haue / a feuere terciane
 Or an Agew / þat may be youre bane
 A day / or two / ye shul han degestyues
 Of wormes / er ye take youre laxatyues 4152
 Of Lauriol / Centaure and ffumetere
 Or ellis of Ellebor / that groweth there
 Of Katapuce / or of Gaytrys beryis
 Of herbe yue growyng in oure yerd / they merye is 4156
 Pekke hem vp right as ther growe / and ete hem In
 Be myrie housbonde / for youre fader kyn
 Dredeth no dreem / I kan sey yow namoore
 ¶ Madame quod he / grant mercy of youre loore 4160
 But nathelees / as touchyng dann Catoun
 That hath of wisdom / swich a gret renoun
 Thogh þat he bad / no dremes for to drede
 By god men may / in olde bokes rede 4164
 Of many a man / moore of auctoritee
 Than euere Caton was / so mote I thee
¹[T]hat al the reuers seyn / of his sentence [¹Rats. leaf 101, bk]
 And han wel founden / by experience 4168
 That dremes / ben signyficaciõs
 As wel / of ioye / as tribulaciõs
 That folk enduren / in this lyf present
 Ther nedeth / make of this noon argument 4172
 The verray preue / sheweth it in dede
 ¶ Oon of the gretteste Auctour / þat men rede
 Seith thus / þat whilom two felawes wente
 On pilgrymage / in a ful good entente 4176
 And happed so / they coomen in a town
 Where as ther was / swich congregacioun
 Of peple / and eek so streit of herbergage
 That they ne founde / as muche as o cotage 4180
 In which they bothe / myghte ylogged be
 Wherefore / they mosten of necessitee
 As for that nyght departe compaignye
 And ech of hem / gooth to his hostelrye 4184

And took his loggyng^t as it wolde falle
 That oon of hem / was logged in a stalle
 ffer in a yeerd / with oxen of the plow
 That oother man / was logged wel ynow 4188
 As was his auenture / or his fortune
 That vs gouerneth alle / as in commune
 And so bifel / þat longe / er it were day
 This man mette in his bed / ther as he lay 4192
 How þat his felawe / gan vp-on hym calle
 And seyde allas / for in an Oxes stalle
 This nyght^t I shal be mordred ther I lye
 Now help me deere brother / or I dye 4196
 In alle haste / com to me / he sayde
 ¶ This man / out of his sleepe / for feere abrayde
 But whan þat he was wakned / of his sleep
 He turned hym / and took of this no keepe 4200
 Hym thoughte / his dreem nas but a vanytee
 Thus twies / in his slepyng dremed he
 And atte thridde tyme / yet his felawe
 Cam as hym thoughte / and seyde I am now slawe 4204
 Bihoold my bloody woundes / depe and wyde
 Arys vp erly / in the morwe tyde
 And atte Westgate of the town quod he [leaf 102]
 A Carte ful of donge / ther shaltow se 4208
 In which / my body is hyd ful priuely
 Do thilke Cart^t aresten boldely
 My gold caused my mordre / sooth to seyn
 And tolde hym euery poynt^t how he was sleyn 4212
 With a ful pitous face / pale of hewe
 And truste wel / his dreem he fond ful trewe
 ffor on the morwe / as soone as it was day
 To his felawes In / he took the way 4216
 And whan þat he cam / to this Oxes stalle
 After his felawe / he bigan to calle
 ¶ The hostiler / answerde hym anon
 And seyde / sire / youre felawe is agon 4220

As soone as day / he wente out of the town
 ¶ This man / gan fallen in suspeioun
 Remembrynge / on hise dremes þat he mette
 And forth he goth / no lenger wolde he lette 4224
 Vn-to the westgate of the town / and fond
 A dong Carte / went as it were to donge lond
 That was arrayed / in that same wise
 As ye han herd / the dede man deuyse 4228
 And with an hardy herte / he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce / and Iustice / of this felonye
 My felawe / mordred is / this same nyght
 And in this Cart heere / he lyth gapyng vp-right 4232
 I crye / on the Mynystres / quod he
 That sholde kepe / and rulen this Citee
 Harrow / allas / heere lyth my felawe slayn
 What sholde I moore / vn-to this tale sayn 4236
 The peple vp sterte / and caste the Cart to grounde
 And in the myddel of the dong^t they founde
 The dede man / þat mordred was al newe
 ¶ O blisful god / þat art so Iust and trewe 4240
 Lo / how þat thow biwreyest^t mordre alway
 Mordre wol out^t that se we day by day
 Mordre / is so wlatom / and abhomynable
 To god / that is so Iust and resonable 4244
 That he ne wod nat suffre it helyd be
 Though it abyde / a yeer / or two / or thre
¹[M]ordre wol out^t this my conclusioun [¹ *Rats.* leaf 102, back]
 And right anon / Ministres of that town 4248
 Han hent the Cartere / and so soore hym pyned
 And eek^t the hostiler / so sore engyned
 That they biknewe / hire wikkednesse anon
 And were anhanged / by the nekke bon 4252
 Heere may men sen / þat dremes ben to drede
 ¶ And certes / in the same book I rede
 Right^t in the nexte Chapitre / after this
 I gabbe nat^t so haue I ioie or blys 4256

Two men / þat wolde han passed ouer see
 ffor certeyn cause / in-to a fer contree
 If þat the wynd / ne hadde ben contrarie
 That made hem / in a Citee for to tarie 4260
 That stood ful myrie / vp on an hauen syde
 But on a day / agayn the euen tyde
 The wynd gan chaunge / and blew right as hem leste
 Iolif and glad / they wenten vn-to reste 4264
 And casten hem / ful erly for to sayle
 But herkneth / to that o man / fil a gret meruaille
 ¶ That oon of hem / in slepyng^t as he lay
 Hym mette a wonder dreem / agayn the day 4268
 Hym thoughte / a man stood / by his beddes syde
 And hym comanded / þat he sholde abyde
 And seyde hym thus / if thow tomorwe wende
 Thow shalt be dreynt^t my tale is at an ende 4272
 ¶ He wook / and tolde his felawe what he mette
 And preyde hym / his viage to lette
 As for that day / he preyde hym to byde
 ¶ His felawe / þat lay / by his beddes syde 4276
 Gan for to laughe / and scorned hym ful faste
 No dreem quod he / may so myn herte agaste
 That I wol lette / for to do my thynges
 I sette nat a straw / by thy dremynges 4280
 ffor sweuenes ben / but vanytees and Iapes
 Men dreme al day / of Owles / or of Apes
 And of many a maze / ther with al
 Men dreme of thyng^t þat neuere was ne shal 4284
 But sith I see / þat thow wolt here abyde
 And thus forslewthen / wilfully thy tyde
 God woot it reweth me / and haue good day [leaf 103]
 And thus / he took his leue / and wente his way 4288
 But er þat he / hadde half his cours yseyled
 Noot I nat why / ne what meschaunce it eyled
 But casuelly / the shippes botme rente
 And shipe and man / vnder the water wente 4292

In sighte of othere shippes / it bisyde
 That *with* hem seyled / at the same tyde
 And therefore / faire Pertelote so deere
 By swiche ensamples olde / maystow leere 4296
 That no man / sholde ben to recchelees
 Of dremes / for I sey thee doutelees
 That many a dreem / ful soore is for to drede
 ¶ Lo / in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede 4300
 That was Kenulphus sone / the noble Kyng^t
 Of Mertenrike / how Kenelm mette a thyng^t
 Alite / er he was mordred / on a day
 His mordre / in his auysion he say 4304
 His norice / hym expowned euery del
 His sweuene / and bad hym for to kepe hym wel
 ffor traysoñ / but he nas but .vij. yeer old
 And therefore / litel tale hath he told 4308
 Of any dreem / so holy was his herte
 By god / I hadde leuere than my sherte
 That ye hadde rad his legende / as haue I
 Dame Pertelote / I sey yow trewely 4312
 Macrobeus / that writ the Auysioñ
 In Affrike / of the worthy Cipioñ
 Affermeth dremes / and seith þat they ben
 Warnynge of thynges / þat men after sen 4316
 ¶ And forther moore / I pray yow looketh wel
 In the olde testament of Danyel
 If he heeld dremes / any vanytee
 ¶ Rede eek of Ioseph / and there shul ye see 4320
 Wher dremes be som tyme / I sey nat alle
 Warnynge of thynges / þat shul after falle
 ¶ Looke of Egipte / the Kyng Daun Pharao
 His bakere / and his butiller also 4324
 Wher they ne felte / noon effect in dremes
 Who so wol seke / Actes of sondry Remes
¹[M]ay rede of dremes / many a wonder thyng^t [¹Rats. lf103, bk]
 ¶ Lo Cresus / which þat was of Lyde kyng^t 4328

Mette he nat^t þat he sat vp-on a tree
 Which signifyde / he sholde an hanged be
 ¶ Lo here Andromacha / Ectores wyf
 That day that Ector / sholde lese his lyf 4332
 She dremed / on the same nyght biforn
 How þat the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn
 If thilke day / he wente in-to bataille
 She warned hym / but it myghte nat auaille 4336
 He wente for to fighte / nathelees
 And he was slayn anon / of Achilles
 But thilke tale / is al to long^t to telle
 And eek / it is ney day / I may nat dwelle 4340
 Shortly I seye / as for conclusiō
 That I shal han / of this auysioñ
 Aduersitee / and I seye forther moor
 That I ne telle / of laxatyues no stoor 4344
 ffor they ben venymes / I woot it wel
 I hem deffie / I loue hem neuer a del
 ¶ Now lat vs speke of myrthe and stynte al this
 Madame Pertelote / so haue I blys 4348
 Of o thyng^t god hath sent me large *grace*
 ffor whan I se / the beautee / of youre face
 Ye ben so scarlet reed / aboute youre eyen
 It maketh / al my drede for to deyen 4352
 ffor also siker / as In principio
 Mulier / est hominis confusio
 Madame / the sentence / of this latyn is
 Womman / is mannes ioye and al his blys 4356
 ffor whan I feele a nyght^t youre softe syde
 Al be it^t þat I may nat on yow ryde
 ffor þat oure perche / is maad so narwe allas
 I am so ful / of Ioye and of solas 4360
 That I deffie / bothe sweuene and dreem
 And with that word / he fley doun fro the beem
 ffor it was day / and eke hise hennes alle
 And with a chuk^t he gan hem for to calle 4364

ffor he hadde founde a corn / lay in the yerd
 Real he was / he was namoore aferd
 He fethered Pertelote / twenty tyme [leaf 104]
 And trad as ofte / er it was pryme 4368
 He looketh / as it were a grym leoun
 And on hise toos / he rometh vp and doun
 Hym deynd nat / to sette his foot to grounde
 And chukketh / whan he hath a corn yfounde 4372
 And to hym rennen thanne / hise wyues alle
 Thus real / as a Prince is in his halle
 Leue I this Chauntecler / in his pasture
 And after / wol I telle his auenture 4376
 ¶ Whan that the Monthe / in which the world bigan
 That highte March / whan god first maked man
 Was complet and passed were also
 Syn March bigan / 30. dayes and two 4380
 Bifel / þat Chauntecler / in al his pryde
 Hise seuene wyues / walkyng him bisyde
 Caste vp hise eyen / to the brighte sonne
 That in the signe of Taurus / hadde yronne 4384
 xx. degrees and oon / and som what moore
 And knew by kynde / and by noon oother loore
 That it was pryme / and krew with blisful steuene
 The sonne he seyde / is clomben vp on heuene 4388
 40. degrees and oon / and moore ywis
 Madame Pertelote / my worldes blys
 Herkneþ thyse blisful bryddes / how they synge
 And se the fresshe floures / how they sprynge 4392
 fful is myn herte / of reuel and solas
 But sodeynly / hym fil a sorweful cas
 ffor euere the latter ende of ioie / is wo
 God woot þat worldly ioie / is soone ago 4396
 And if a Rethor / koude faire endite
 He in a Cronycle / saufly myghte it write
 As for a souereyn notabilitee Petrus Comestor
 Now euery wys man / lat hym herkne me 4400

This storie / is also trewe I vndertake
 As is the book / of Launcelot de Lake
 That wommen holde / in ful gret reuerence
 Now wol I / torne agayn to my sentence 4404
 ¶ A Colfox / ful of sley Iniquitee
 That in the groue / hadde woned yeres thre
¹[By] heigh ymaginaciō / forncast^t [1 Rats. leaf 104, back]
 The same nyght^t thurgh-out the hegges brast^t 4408
 In-to the yerd / ther Chauntecler the faire
 Was wont^t and eek hise wyues to repaire
 And in a bed of wortes / stille he lay
 Til it was passed / vndren of the day 4412
 Waitynge his tyme / on Chauntecler to falle
 As gladly doon / thise homycides alle
 That in awayt liggen / to mordre men
 O false mordrour / lurkyng in thy den 4416
 O newe Scariot^t newe Genylon
 ffalse dissimilour / o greek Synoñ
 That broghtest Troye / al outrely to sorwe
 O Chauntecler / acursed be that morwe 4420
 That thow in-to the yerd / flaugh fro the bemys
 Thow were / ful wel y-warned by thy dremys
 That thilke day / was perilous to thee
 But^t what þat god forwoot^t moot nedes be 4424
 After the opynyōn of certeyn clerkis
 Witnesse on hym / þat any parfit clerk is
 That in scole / is gret altercaciō
 In this matere / and gret disputisiō 4428
 And hath ben / of an hundred thousand men
 But I ne kan / nat bulte it to the bren
 As kan / the holy doctour Augustyn
 Or Boece / or the Bisshope Bradwardyn 4432
 Wheither / þat goddes worthy forewityng^t
 Streyneth me nedely / for to doon a thyng/
 Nedely clepe I / symple necessitee
 Or ellis / if fre choys / be graunted me 4436

To do that same thyng^t or do it noght^t
 Though god forwoot^t it/ er þat I was wroght^t
 Or if his wityng^t streyneth neuer a del
 But by necessitee / condicionel 4440
 I wol nat han to do / of swich matere
 My tale is of a Cok^t as ye may heere
 That took his conseil / of his wyf/ with sorwe
 To walken in the yerd / vp-on that morwe 4444
 That he hadde met the dreem / þat I yow tolde
 Wommens conseils / be ful ofte colde
 Wommannes conseil / broghte vs first to wo [leaf 105]
 And made Adam / fro Paradys to go 4448
 Ther as he was / ful myrie and wel at ese
 But for I noot^t to whom it myghte displese
 If I conseil of wommen / wolde blame
 Passe ouer / for I seyde it in my game 4452
 Rede Auctours / where they trete of swich matere
 And what they seyn of wommen heere
 Thise ben the Cokkes wordes and nat myne
 I kan noon harm / on no womman deuyne 4456
 ¶ ffaire in the Sond / to bathe hire myrily
 Lyth Pertelote / and alle hire sustres by
 Agayn the sonne / and Chauntecler so free
 Song myrier / than the Mermayde in the see 4460
 ffor Phisiologus / seith sikerly
 How þat they syngen / wel and myrily
 ¶ And so bifel / that as he caste his eye
 Among the wortes / on a Boterflye 4464
 He was war of this fox / þat lay ful lowe
 No thyng^t ne liste hym thanne for to crowe
 But cryde anon / cok^t cok^t and vp he sterte
 As man / þat was affrayd in his herte 4468
 ffor naturelly / a beest desireth flee
 ffro his contrarie / if he may it see
 Though he neuere erst^t hadde seye it with his eye
 This Chauntecler / whan he gan hym espye 4472

He wolde han fled / but þat the fox anon
 Seyde gentil sire / allas wher wol ye gon
 Be ye affrayd / of me þat am youre freend
 Now certes / I were worse than a feend 4476
 If I to yow / wolde harm / or vileynye
 I am nat come / youre conseil for tespye
 But trewely / the cause of my comynge
 Was oonly / for to herkne how þat ye synge 4480
 ffor trewely / ye han as myrie a steuene
 As any Angel hath / þat is in heuene
 Ther with / ye han in Musyk^t moore feelynge
 Than hadde Boece / or any þat kan synge 4484
 My lord youre fader / god his soule blesse
 And eek youre moder / of hire gentillesse
¹[Ha]n in myn hous yben / to my gret ese [¹ *Rats.* leaf 105, back]
 And certes sire / ful fayn wolde I yow plese 4488
 ¶ But for men speke of syngynge / I wol seye
 So mote I browke wel / myne eyen tweye
 Saue ye / I herde neuere man so synge
 As dide youre fader / in the morwenynge 4492
 Certes / it was of herte / al that he song^t
 And for to make his voys / the moore strong^t
 He wolde so peyne hym / þat with bothe hise eyen
 He moste wynke / so loude he wolde cryen 4496
 And stonden on his typton / ther with al
 And strecche forth his nekke / long and smal
 And eek / he was of swich discrecioñ
 That ther nas no man / in no Regioñ 4500
 That hym in song / or wisdom myghte passe
 I haue wel rad / in daun Burnelle the Asse
 Among hise vers / how þat ther was a cok^t
 ffor a preestes sone / yaf hym a knock^t 4504
 Vp-on his leg^t whil he was yong and nyce
 He made hym / for to lese his benefice
 But certeyn / ther nys no comparisoñ
 Bitwix the wisdom / and discrecioñ 4508

Of youre fader / and of his subtiltee
 Now syngeth sire / for seynte charitee
 Lat se / konne ye youre fader countrefete
 ¶ This Chauntecler / hise wynges gan to bete 4512
 As man þat koude / his trayson nat espie
 So was he rauysshed / with his flaterie
 ¶ Allas ye lordes / many a fals flatour
 Is in youre court and many a losengeour 4516
 That plesen yow wel moore / by my feyth
 Than he / þat soothfastnesse vn-to yow seith
 Redeth Ecclesiaste / of flaterye
 Beth war ye lordes / of hir trecherye 4520
 ¶ This Chauntecler / stood hye vp on his toos
 Strecchyng his nekke / and heeld hise eyen cloos
 And gan to crowe / lowde for the nones
 And daun Russelle the fox / stirte vp atones 4524
 And by the gargat hente Chauntecler
 And on his bak / toward the wode hym beer
 ffor yet ne was ther no man / þat hym sewed [leaf 106]
 ¶ O destynnee / þat mayst nat ben eschewed 4528
 Allas þat Chauntecler / fly fro the bemes
 Allas / his wif / ne roghte nat of dremes
 And on a friday / fil al this meschaunce
 ¶ O Venus / þat art goddesse of plesaunce 4532
 Syn þat thy seruant was this Chauntecler
 And in thy seruyce / dide al his power
 Moore for delit than world to multiplie
 Why woldestow suffre hym / on thy day to dye 4536
 ¶ O Gaufred / deere maister souerayn
 That whan / thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
 With shot compleynedest his deth so soore
 Why ne hadde I now / thy sentence and thy loore 4540
 The friday for to chide / as diden ye
 ffor on a ffriday / soothly slayn was he
 Thanne wolde I shewe yow / how þat I kowde pleyne
 ffor Chaunteclerys drede / and for his peyne 4544

¶ Certes / swich cry / ne lamentaciō
 Was neuere of ladyes maad / whan ylioñ
 Was wonne / and Pirrus / with his streite swerd
 Whanne he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd 4548
 And slayn hym / as seith vs Eneydos
 As maden / alle the hennes in the cloos
 Whan they hadde seyn / of Chauntecler the sighte
 But souereynly / dame Pertelote shrighthe 4552
 fful louder / than dide Hasdrubales wyf
 Whan þat hire housbonde / hadde ylost his lyf
 And þat the Romyans / hadden brend Cartage
 She was / so ful of torment and of rage 4556
 That wilfully / vn-to the fyr she sterte
 And brende hir seluen / with a stedefast herte
 ¶ O woful hennes / right so cryden ye
 As / whan þat Nero / brende the Citee 4560
 Of Rome / cryden the senatours wyues
 ffor þat hir housbondes / losten alle hire lyues
 With-uten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn
 Now wol I turne / to my tale agayn 4564
 ¶ The sely widwe / and eek hire doghtres two
 Herden thise hennes crye / and maken wo
¹[And] out at dores / stirten they anon [1 Rats. leaf 106, back]
¹[A]nd seyen the fox / toward the groue gon 4568
 And bar vp-on his bak / the cok / away
 And criden / out harrow and weilaway
 Ha / ha. the fox / and after hym they ran
 And eek with stauens / many another man 4572
 Ran Colle oure dogge / and Talbot and Gerlande
 And Malkyn / with a distaf in hire hande
 Ran Cow and calf / and eek the verray hogges
 So fered / for berkyng of the dogges 4576
 And showtyng of the men / and wommen eek
 They ronne so / hem thoughte hire herte breek
 They yelleden / as fendes doon in helle
 The dokes cryden / as men wolde hem quelle 4580

The gees for feere / flowen ouer the trees
 Out of the hyue / cam the swarm of bees
 So hydous was the noyse / a benedicite
 Certes / he lakke Straw / and his meynee 4584
 Ne made neuere showtes / half so shrille
 Whan þat they wolden / any flemyng kille
 As thilke day / was maad vp-on the fox
 Of bras / they broghten bemys / and of box 4588
 Of horn / of boon / in whiche they blewe and powped
 And ther with al / they skryked and they howped
 It semed / as þat heuene sholde falle
 Now goode men / I prey yow herkneþ alle 4592
 Lo / how ffortune / turneth sodeynly
 The hope / and pryde eek of hire enemy
 This cok þat lay vp-on the foxes bak
 In al his drede / vn-to the fox he spak 4596
 And seyde sire / if þat I were as ye
 Yit sholde I seyn / as wys god helpe me
 Turneth ayein ye proude cherles alle
 A verray pestilence / vp-on yow falle 4600
 Now I am come / vn-to this wodes syde
 Maugree youre heed / the cok shal here abyde
 I wol hym ete in feith / and that anon
 ¶ The fox answerde / in feith it shal be don 4604
 And [as] he spak that word / al sodeynly
 This cok / brak from his mouth delyuerly
 And hye vp on a tree / he fley anon [leaf 107]
 ¶ And whan the fox say / þat he was gon 4608
 Allas quod he / o Chauntecler Allas
 I haue to yow quod he / ydon trespas
 In as muche / as I maked yow aferd
 Whan I yow hente / and broghte in-to this yerd 4612
 But sire / I dide it in no wikke entente
 Com doun / and I shal telle yow what I mente
 I shal seye sooth to yow / god help me so
 ¶ Nay thanne quod he / I shrewe vs bothe two 4616

And first I shrewe my self / bothe blood and bones
 If thow bigile me / any ofter than ones
 Thow shalt namoore / thurgh thy flaterye
 Do me to synge / and wynken with myn eye 4620
 ffor he þat wynketh / whan he sholde see
 Al wilfully / god lat hym neuere thee
 ¶ Nay quod the fox / but god yeue hym meschañce
 That is / so vndiscret / of gouernañce 4624
 That Iangleth / whan he sholde holde his pees
 ¶ Lo swich it is / for to be recchelees
 And necligent and truste on flaterye
 But ye / þat holden this tale a folye 4628
 As of a fox / or of a cok and hen
 Taketh the moralitee / goode men
 ffor Seint Poul seith / þat al that writen is
 To oure doctryne / it is ywrite ywis 4632
 Taketh the fruyt and lat the chaf be stille
 Now goode god / if þat it be thy wille
 As seith my lord / so make vs alle goode men
 And brynge vs / to his heye blisse Amen

Dominus Archie-
piscopus Cantu-
ariensis

¶ Here is ended / the Nonnes Preestes tale ❸

[*The Manciple's Prologue follows in the MS.*]

Appendix 6.

DRAWINGS OF THE 23 TELLERS

OF THE

24 CANTERBURY TALES,

COPIED FROM THE ELLESMERE MS,

AND CUT ON WOOD,

BY

Mr W. H. Hooper.

REMARKS ON THE 21ST JANUARY

1801

21 JANUARY 1801

COPIED FROM THE RECORDS

AND SET ON

THE 21ST JANUARY

*In this first issue, 1871, only 14 of the Cuts are given.
The other 10 will follow in 1872. When the print of each
MS is bound, the cut of each Teller of a Tale can be put
at the beginning of his Tale, as in the Ellesmere MS, or
by his description in the General Prologue, to contrast the
artist's hand with the poet's; or, all the cuts can be put
together before or after the Prologue, or at the end of the
volume (as not part of the MS), according to the fancy
of each Member.*

*2. 10 find
unw g!*

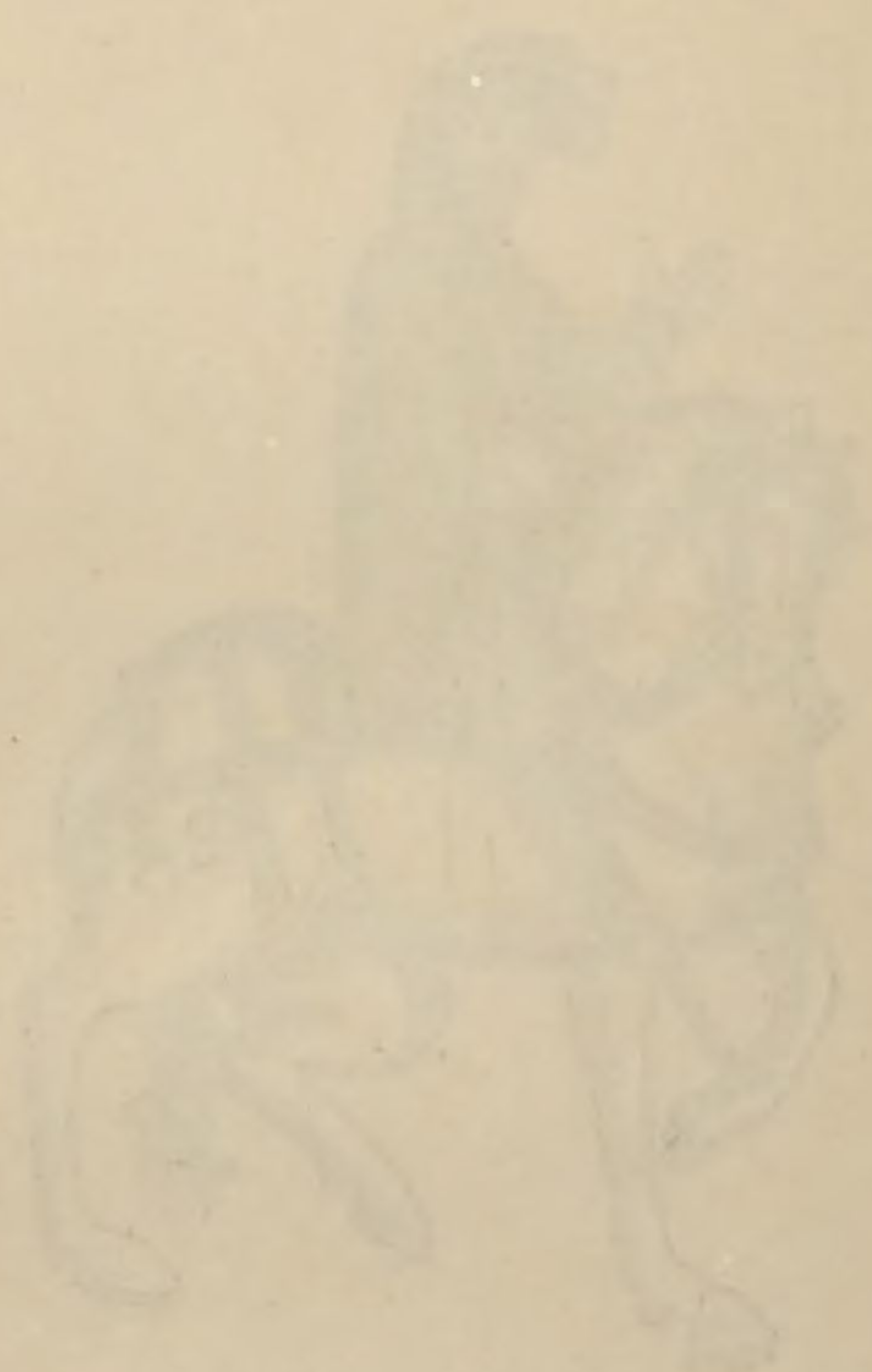
The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the



THE KNYGHT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 14.

(The brand on the horse's hip—M, ? for *Miles*—
is in ink, and probably by a later hand.)



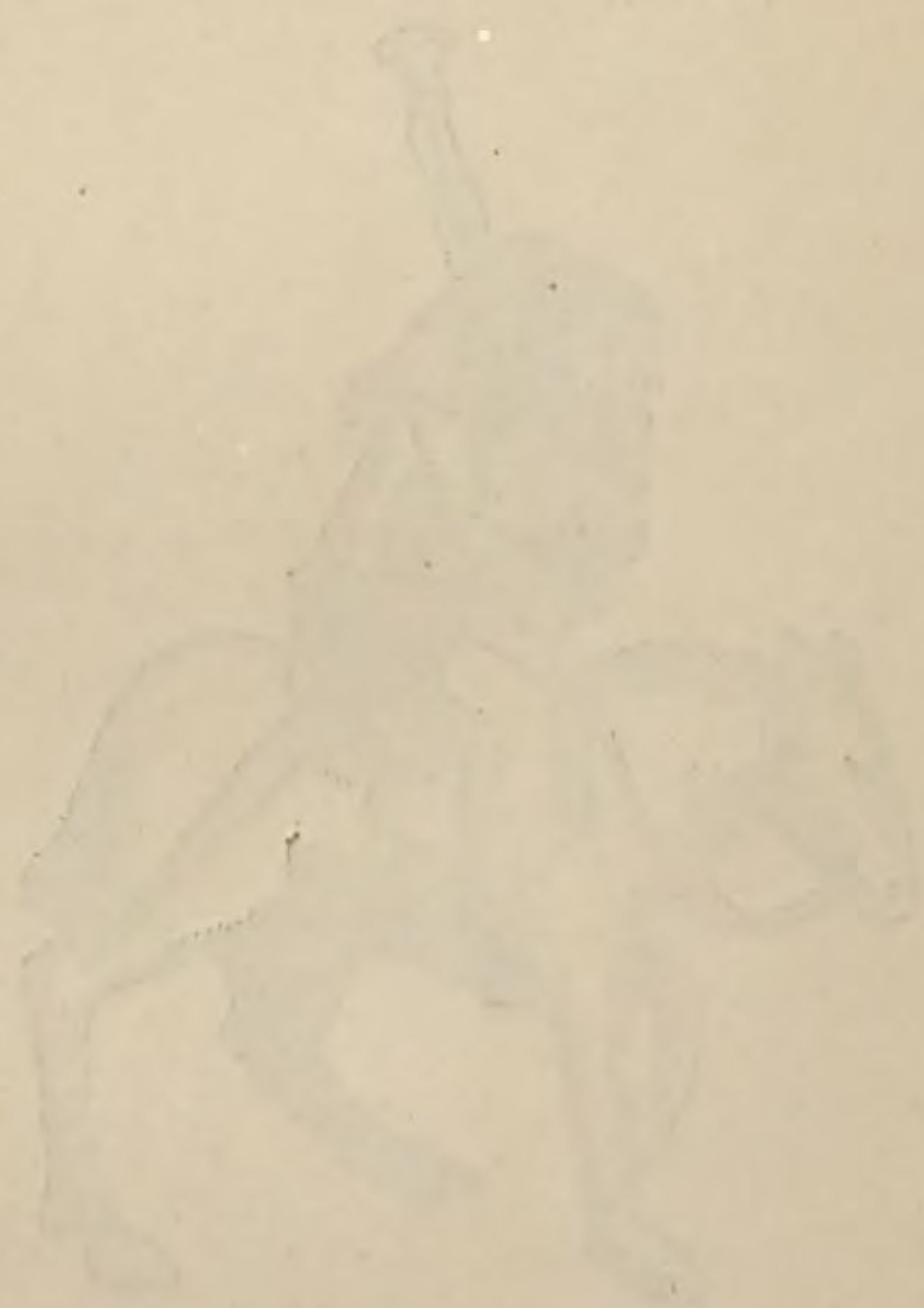
THE FINEST
OF THE ART

OF THE ART
OF THE ART



THE MILLERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 38, back.

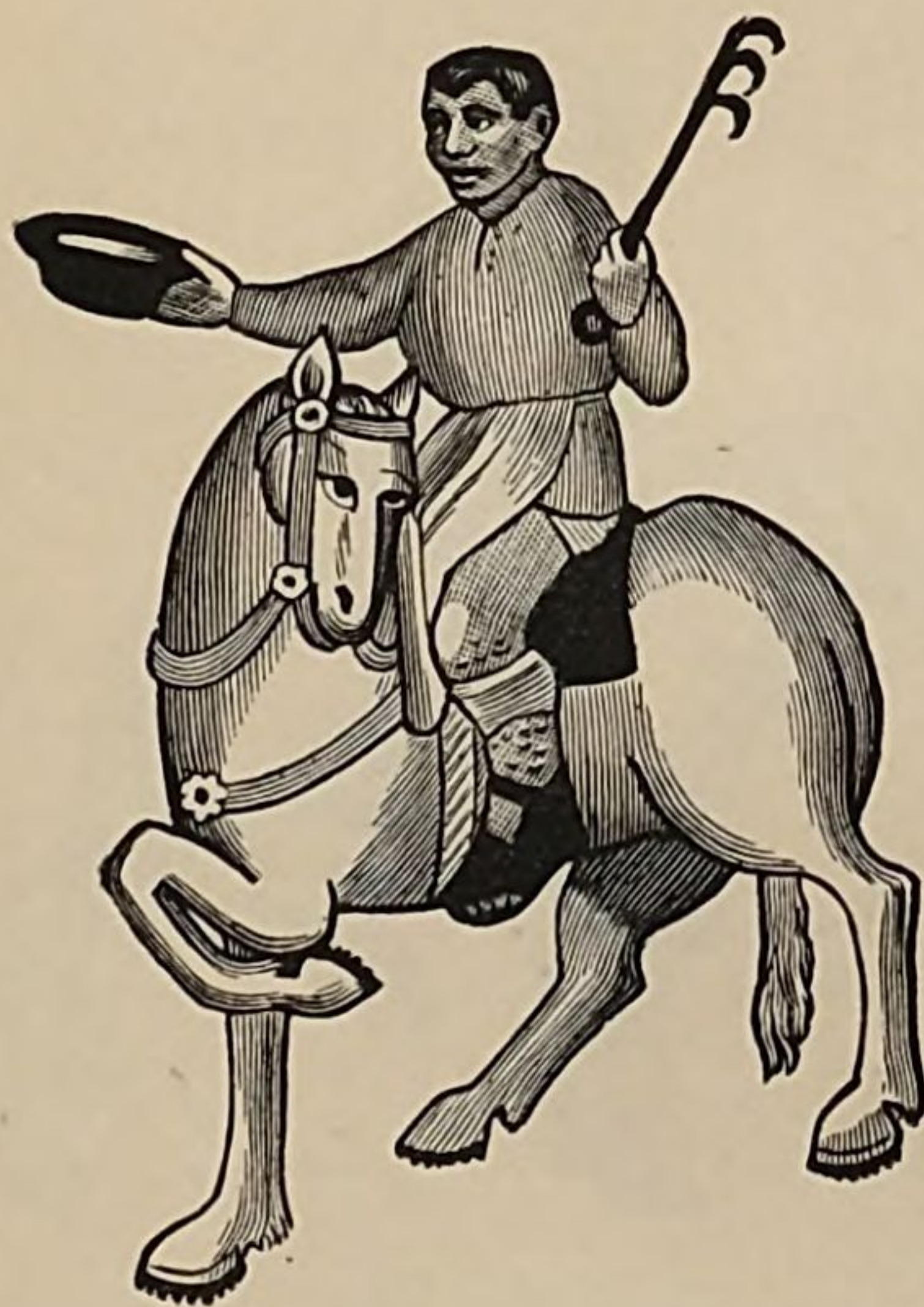


THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PRESS



THE REVE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 46.



THE COOK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 51.



PLATE 20
THE GREAT WALL



THE MAN OF LAWE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 54, back.



THE SHIPMAN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 147, back.



THE PRIORESSE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 152, back.



CHAUCER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 157, back.



THE MONK.
Ellesmere MS, leaf 173.



THE NONNES PREEST.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 183.





THE DOCTOR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 137.



THE PARDONER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 142.



THE WYF OF BATHE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 76.



THE END OF THE WORLD

BY J. H. B. B. B.



THE FRERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 80, back.



THE SOMONOUR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 85, back.





THE CLERK OF OXFORD.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 92.



THE MERCHANT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 106, back.



THE SQUIRE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 119, back.



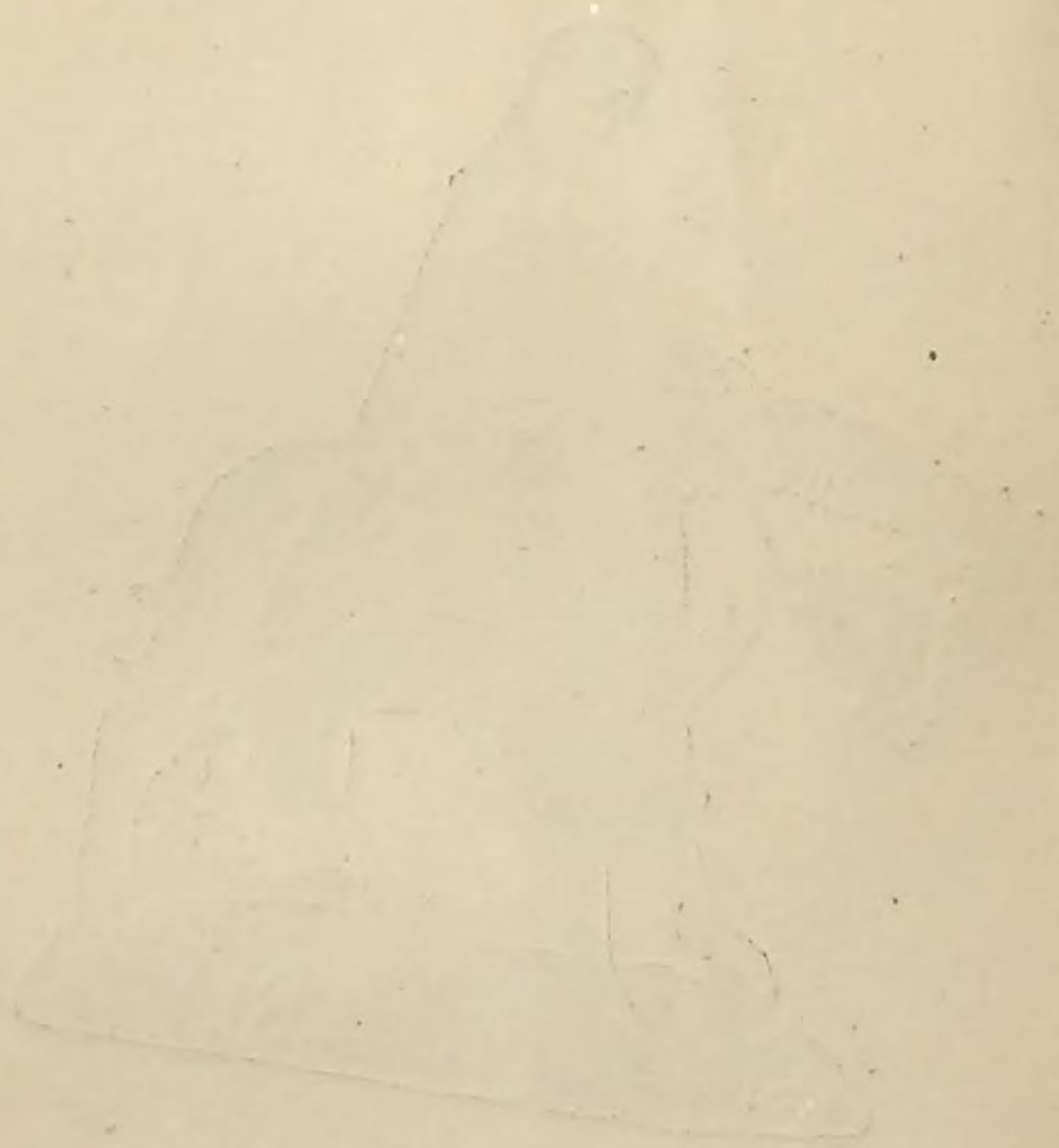
THE FRANKLIN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 127, back.



THE SECOND NUN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 191.



THE END OF THE

OF THE



THE CANON'S YEOMAN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 198.



THE MANCIPLE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 207.



Figure 1. 187
The first of the series

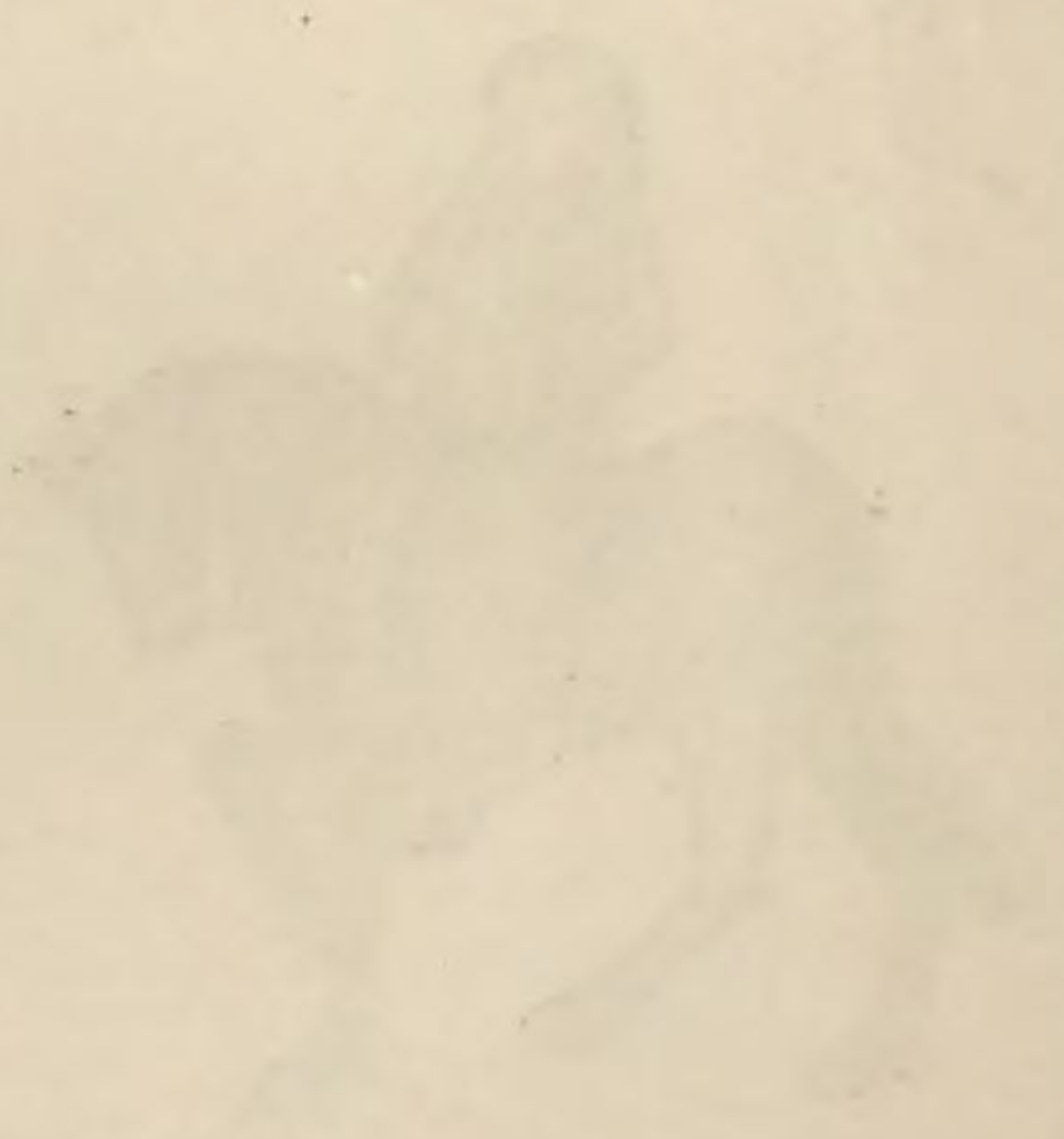


THE PARSON.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 210, back.

[These coloured figures in the Ellesmere MS have evidently been drawn by two different persons. The little pieces of ground on which the later hand places his figures, mark those done by him.]

His drawing is not so good as the first hand's; and his colours are badly ground, and of poor quality.—W. H. HOOPER.]



THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Cambridge, Mass.
U.S.A.

The issue for 1881, in the **First Series**, is,

- LXIII. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* from the Campsall MS, b. 1415 A.D. (written for Henry V when Prince of Wales), Harleian MS. 2280, and Cambr. Univ. Libr. Gg. 4. 27. Part I. Books 1 and 2.

The issue for 1882, in the **First Series**, is,

- LXIV. A Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* from the Campsall MS, before 1415 A.D. (written for Henry V when Prince of Wales), Harleian MS. 2280, and Cambr. Univ. Libr. Gg. 4. 27. Part II. Books 3, 4, 5.

The issue for 1883, in the **First Series**, is,

- LXV. Part II of Mr W. M. Rossetti's Comparison of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* with Boccaccio's *Filistrato*, completing the work.

The issue for 1884, in the **First Series**, when ready, will be,

- LXVI—LXXI. 6 Appendixes to the 6 MSS of the Six-Text, with Wood-cuts and colored Lithographs of 6 Tellers of Tales and of 6 emblematical Figures from the Cambridge Univ. MS, Gg. 4. 27, &c., and Process Engravings, for the Ellesmere MS Part, of the 23 Ellesmere MS Miniatures. The Hengwrt MS, Part VI, contains The Canon's-Yeoman's Tale from the Lichfield Cathedral MS.

- LXXII. The Six-Text, Part IX, with colored Lithographs of 6 Tellers of Tales and 6 emblematical Figures from the Cambridge Univ. MS Gg. 4. 27; Forewords, Title-pages for the three volumes, &c.; and Prof. Hiram Corson's Index to the Subjects and Names of *The Canterbury Tales*.

The issue for 1885, in the **First Series**, is,

- LXXIII. The Harleian MS 7334 of *The Canterbury Tales*, with Woodcuts of 23 Tellers of Tales from the Ellesmere MS, &c.

- LXXIV. Autotype Specimens of the chief Chaucer MSS. Part IV. One of the Ellesmere MS.

The issue for 1886, in the **First Series**, will be

- LXXV. Chaucer's *Boece* from the Cambridge University MS. Ii. 3. 21. [Issued.]

- LXXVI. Chaucer's *Boece* from the Additional MS 10,340 in the British Museum, as edited by the Rev. Dr. Richard Morris for the Early English Text Society's Extra Series in 1868. [Issued.]

- LXXVII, LXXVIII. A *Rhyme-Index to Chaucer's Minor Poems*, by Miss Isabel Marshall and Miss Lela Porter, with an Index by Prof. Corson to the Subjects and Names of the *Minor Poems* (if ready). Both in Royal 4to for the *Parallel-Text*, and in 8vo for the One-Text print of the *Minor Poems*. (Mr. W. G. Aylward has agreed to edit the Society's *Chaucer Concordance*.)

There will probably be no issue for 1887, in the **First Series**.

SECOND SERIES.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for 1868 is,

1. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part I. This work includes an amalgamation of Prof. F. J. Child's two Papers on the use of the final *-e* by Chaucer (in T. Wright's ed. of *The Canterbury Tales*) and by Gower (in Dr Pauli's ed. of the *Confessio Amantis*).

2. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part I.: 1. Prof. Ebert's Review of Sandras's *Etude sur Chaucer*, translated by J. W. van Rees Hoets, M.A.; 2. A 13th-century Latin Treatise on the *Chilindre* (of the *Shipman's Tale*), edited by Mr. E. Brock.

3. A Temporary Preface to the Society's Six-Text edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Part I, attempting to show the right Order of the Tales, and the Days and Stages of the Pilgrimage, &c. &c., by F. J. Furnivall, Esq., M.A.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for 1869 is,

4. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part II.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for 1870 is,

5. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part III.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for 1871 is,

6. *Trial-Forewords to my Parallel-Text edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems* for the Chaucer Society (with a try to set Chaucer's Works in their right order of Time), by Fredk. J. Furnivall. Part I.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for 1872 is,

7. *Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part I. 1. The original of the *Man of Law's Tale* of Constance, from the French Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet, Arundel MS 56, ab. 1340 A.D., collated with the later copy, ab. 1400, in the National Library at Stockholm; copied and edited, with a translation, by Mr. Edmund Brock. 2. The Tale of "Merelaus the Emperor," from the Early-English version of the *Gesta Romanorum* in Harl. MS 7333; and 3. Part of Matthew Paris's *Vita Offae Primi*, both stories illustrating incidents in the *Man of Law's Tale*. 4. Two French Fabliaux like the *Reeve's Tale*. 5. Two Latin Stories like the *Friar's Tale*.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1873** is,

8. Albertano of Brescia's *Liber Consilii et Consolationis*, A.D. 1246 (the Latin source of the French original of Chaucer's *Melibe*), edited from the MSS, by Dr. Thor Sundby.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1874** is,

9. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part II.: 3. John of Hoveden's *Practica Chilindri*, edited from the MS, with a translation, by Mr. E. Brock. 4. Chaucer's use of the final -e, by Joseph Payne, Esq. 5. Mrs. E. Barrett-Browning on Chaucer: being those parts of her review of the *Book of the Poets*, 1842, which relate to him; here reprinted by leave of Mr Robert Browning. 6. Professor Bernhard Ten-Brink's critical edition of Chaucer's *Compleynte to Pite*.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1875** is,

10. *Originals and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part II. 6. Alphonsus of Lincoln, a Story like the *Prioress's Tale*. 7. How Reynard caught Chanticleer, the source of the *Nun's-Priest's Tale*. 8. Two Italian Stories, and a Latin one, like the *Pardoner's Tale*. 9. The Tale of the Priest's Bladder, a story like the *Summoner's Tale*, being 'Li dis de le Vescie a Prestre,' par Jakes de Basiw. 10. Petrarch's Latin Tale of Griseldis (with Boccaccio's Story from which it was re-told), the original of the *Clerk's Tale*. 11. Five Versions of a Pear-tree Story like that in the *Merchant's Tale*. 12. Four Versions of The Life of Saint Cecilia, the original of the *Second Nun's Tale*.

11. *Early English Pronunciation*, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part IV.

12. *Life-Records of Chaucer*, Part I, The Robberies of Chaucer by Richard Brerelay and others at Westminster, and at Hatcham, Surrey, on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 1390, with some Account of the Robbers, from the Enrolments in the Public Record Office, by Walford D. Selby, Esq., of the Public Record Office.

13. Thynne's Animadversions (1599) on Speght's *Chaucers Workes*, re-edited from the unique MS, by Fredk. J. Furnivall, with fresh Lives of William and Francis Thynne, and the only known fragment of *The Pilgrims Tale*.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1876** is,

14. *Life-Records of Chaucer*, Part II, The Household Ordinances of King Edward II, June 1323 (as englisht by Francis Tate in March 1601 A.D.), with extracts from those of King Edward IV, to show the probable duties of CHAUCER as Valet or Yeoman of the Chamber, and Esquire, to Edward III, of whose Household Book no MS is known; together with Chaucer's Oath as Controller of the Customs; and an enlargd Autotype of Hoccleve's Portrait of Chaucer; edited by F. J. Furnivall.

15. *Originals and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Part III. 13. The Story of Constance, for the *Man of Law's Tale*. 14. The Boy killd by a Jew for singing 'Gaude Maria,' an Analogue of the *Prioress's Tale*. 15. The Paris Beggar-boy murderd by a Jew for singing 'Alma redemptoris mater!' an Analogue of the *Prioress's Tale*; with a Poem by Lydgate.

16. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part III. 7. Chaucer's Prioress, her Nun Chaplain and 3 Priests, illustrated from the Paper Survey of St Mary's Abbey, Winchester, by F. J. Furnivall. 8. Alliteration in Chaucer, by Dr. Paul Lindner. 9. Chaucer a Wicliffite; a critical Examination of the *Parsons Tale*, by Herr Hugo Simon. 10. The sources of the Wife of Bath's Prologue: Chaucer not a borrower from John of Salisbury, by the Rev. W. W. Woolcombe.

17. *Supplementary Canterbury Tales*: 1. The Tale of *Beryn*, with a Prologue of the merry Adventure of the Pardoner with a Tapster at Canterbury, re-edited from the Duke of Northumberland's unique MS, by Fredk. J. Furnivall. Part I, the Text, with Wm. Smith's Map of Canterbury in 1588, now first engravd from his unique MS., and Ogilby's Plan of the Road from London to Canterbury in 1675.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1878** (there was none in 1877) is,

18. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part IV. 11. On *here* and *there* in Chaucer (his Pronunciation of the two e's), by Dr. R. F. Weymouth; 12. On *a*. An Original Version of the *Knight's Tale*; *β*. the Date (1381) and Personages of the *Parlament of Foules*; *γ*. on *Anelida and Arcyte*, on Lollius, on Chaucer, and Boccaccio, &c., by Dr. John Koch, with a fragment of a later *Palamon and Ersyte* from the Dublin MS D. 4. 18.

Of the **Second Series**, the issue for **1884** (none in 1879, '80, '81, '82, '83, '85) is,

19. *Essays on Chaucer, his Words and Works*, Part V: 13. Chaucer's *Pardoner*: his character illustrated by documents of his time, by Dr J. J. Jusserand. 14. Why the *Romaunt of the Rose* is not Chaucer's, by Prof. Skeat, M.A. 15. Chaucer's *Shipman*, and his Barge 'The Maudelayne,' by P. Q. Karkeek, Esq. 16. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* compared with Frère Lorens's *Somme des Vices et des Vertus*, by Wilhelm Eilers, Ph.D., 1882, englisht 1884. 17. On Chaucer's Reputed Works, by T. L. Kington-Oliphant, M.A.

24. *The Tale of Beryn, Part II. Introduction and Glossary*, by F. J. FURNIVALL and W. G. Stone; with an Essay on Analogs of the Tale, by W. A. Clouston.

25. *Trial-Forewords to Chaucer's Minor Poems, Part II*, by Dr John Koch.

Among the Texts and Essays, &c., preparing for the Chaucer Society are:—

Early English Pronunciation, with especial reference to Shakspeare and Chaucer, by Alexander J. Ellis, Esq., F.R.S. Part V. [*This will probably go to Press in 1888.*]

Life-Records of Chaucer, Part IV, Enrolments and Documents from the Public Record Office, the City of London Town-Clerk's Office, &c., edited by Walford D. Selby, Esq., and Dr Furnivall. [*This will probably go to Press in 1888.*]

Chaucer's Road to Canterbury, with Ogilby's Plan of it, 1675, and William Smith's Plan of the City of Canterbury in 1588; by the Rev. W. A. Scott Robertson, M.A., Hon. Sec. of the Kent Archæological Institute.

'A detailed Comparison of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* with the *Teseide* of Boccaccio,' by HENRY WARD, Esq., of the MS Department of the British Museum. [*At Press.*]

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